

HEROES OF MYTH

BY
LILLIAN L. PRICE & CHARLES B. GILBERT

STORIES OF HEROES
EDITED BY
CHARLES B. GILBERT



SILVER, BURDETT & COMPANY

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CHARLES B. GILBERT

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

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EDITED BY CHARLES B. GILBERT,

FORMERLY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK.

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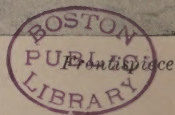
NEW YORK.

BOSTON.

CHICAGO.



A VALKYR. (See page 135.)



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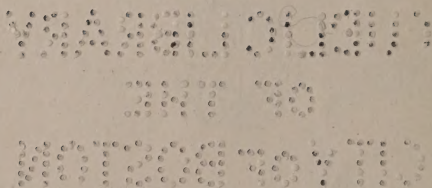
CHICAGO

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Jan. 28. 1912



GENERAL PREFACE.

WHETHER, as Carlyle would have it, history consists properly in the biographies of conspicuous men; or, according to Freeman and his school, in the development of peoples; or in the evolution of ideas, as Hegel argues; is a question for philosophers. For children history is biography, and the biography of heroes. For them types must be individualized and apotheosized. History must be a series of pictures with heroes in the foreground.

To children chronology is without meaning. Whether an event occurred yesterday or a thousand years ago makes no difference. "Long, long ago" and "once upon a time" are quite as intelligible and more effective than "three thousand years ago" or "in the year 56 B.C."

Of vastly greater importance in the education of children than chronological sequence is psychological sequence. In the earlier years of a child's study of history, events should be presented to him in the order in which he is able to apperceive them, rather than in the order of occurrence. This order will depend upon social and psychological

similarities. For example, the prehistoric Greek is more nearly allied to the German of the early Roman Empire than the latter to his contemporary, the imperial Roman; and the modern Bedouin is much nearer to Abraham than to the modern Englishman.

This principle of psychological order has been followed in the present series of historical stories. Types representing similar stages of civilization are presented in conjunction, without regard to chronology. It is hoped that through these stories, thus grouped, children may be interested at the proper times of their own development in the various phases of the evolution of society and in history itself, and that the interest thus awakened may lead to a better study of history than is common in elementary schools.

The stories may be classified as follows:—

First, myths. These are the beginnings of history, and should be presented to the child when his imagination is vivid enough to absorb without a shock the marvels of mythology merely as stories, and when his appetite is keen for all marvels.

Second, stories of nomadic life. These represent a very early stage of history, which should be presented to children when the demand for “true stories” arises and when the “tramp in-

stinct" awakens. The stories tell of wanderers of various times and different types, who may be roughly classified as Pastoral Nomads, Religious Nomads, and Warlike Nomads. Their common characteristic is the absence of devotion to a fixed home, the readiness with which they moved from place to place in search of pasture or conquest, or to satisfy some personal craving. The differences are due mainly to race characteristics and geographic conditions.

Third, chivalry. The stories of this period, as well as the myths and tales of nomads, belong to the period of childhood in the development of civilized society. They may be said to represent the minority of society. The stories are drawn from two sources chiefly, the legends clustering about King Arthur and his Round Table and those relating to the followers of Charlemagne, especially as given in the "*Chanson de Roland*."

Fourth, conquest and empire. The establishment of great personal empires, through conquest followed by organization, by men of extraordinary power, indicates a vastly higher order of civilization than those typified by the nomad and the knight errant. It may be said to represent the young manhood of society. It precedes and prepares the way for that higher development manifested in democratic freedom.

Fifth, freedom. This stands for the highest stage of social evolution yet attained by man. It is the full manhood of society. Its heroes are actuated by nobler motives than those of any other social state. Altruism is here the ruling motive, growing out of the great value put upon individual liberty.

Other books will follow, containing tales of the heroes who in various ways have made life worth living in an organized and highly developed society.

C. B. GILBERT.

ROCHESTER, N.Y.

INTRODUCTION.

THE stories in this book are called myths. They are not true, but were once believed to be true. They were told and believed by people long, long ago to explain the strange and wonderful things which they saw in the world, but did not understand.

Nearly every country has its myths, which the people who lived in it once thought to be true. The father told them to his children, and they repeated them to their children, so that through hundreds and even thousands of years the stories were not forgotten. Oftentimes the people who first told them were ignorant savages like our Indians, for such were those who first lived in nearly all the countries of the world.

All these stories are more or less alike. They tell of strange gods and goddesses, dreadful demons, frightful serpents, wonderful birds and beasts, and marvelous creatures of all sorts.

When some unusual thing happened which the ignorant people could not account for, such as a

violent storm or a great flood, they thought it was caused by one of these strange beings. Even the wonders of nature, the shining of the sun by day, the darkness of the night, the growing of the grass and the trees, the coming of spring, summer, fall, and winter, they thought were caused by some of these gods or other beings, and they talked about them. When brave men and great men who had done wonderful things died, they told stories about them, strangely mixed with gods and beasts and demons.

These stories are all myths. We read them because they show us what the people who lived long ago thought and believed. Some of them have been written as beautiful poems which we love to read. From such poems most of the myths in this book have been taken.

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THE DOOMED PRINCE.

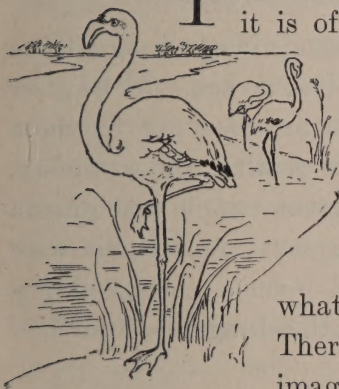
EGYPT.

THE land of Egypt is so old that it is often called the "Cradle of Nations." It lies in the northern part of Africa and is crossed by the wonderful river Nile. Egypt is a beautiful country, full of strange ruins of

what were once marvelous cities. There the Sphinx, a great stone image with a wonderful head

and face, rises out of the desert sands. There, too, under the clear blue sky, rise the lofty pyramids. The river Nile, with its fringes of palm trees, its crocodiles, its lotus flowers, and the long-legged, scarlet flamingoes, has always been loved and worshiped by the Egyptian people.

This story of the Doomed Prince has been translated from an old writing, found upon a piece of papyrus, or ancient Egyptian writing paper. It is



supposed to have been written about 1450 B.C., which makes it over three thousand years old. The story has a sad ending, but these old Egyptians were a very serious-minded people, who believed that what their goddesses, the Hathors,¹ predicted always came true at last.

THE GIFTS OF THE HATHORS.

Once upon a time, thousands of years ago, there lived in Egypt a king who had no son. As he grew old he became very sad, for he knew not to whom his kingdom would go at his death. Day after day, therefore, he entered the great temple and prayed the gods for the gift of a son. At last his wish was heard in heaven, and upon a certain day a baby boy, the prince of the kingdom, was laid within his arms.

When the child was a week old, a great feast was made, and a table was prepared, laid with dishes of silver and gold. This feast was in honor of the baby prince, and to it came the Hathors, the seven goddesses of fate, who should foretell what the child's life would be, and how long he might live.

The prince, clad in swaddling clothes, was brought into the presence of the Hathors, before all the

¹ Hathors = Hăth-ôrs.

assembly of guests, and each Hathor bestowed her gift. The first six gave him beauty, wit, skill in arms, grace, wisdom of speech, and knowledge of tongues; the seventh Hathor, however, spreading her hands out over the child, said, "He shall die by the crocodile, or by the serpent, or by the dog."

Then the king was filled with fear, but he hid his fear from the Hathors.

The king, looking upon the prince and seeing how healthy and beautiful he was, determined to save him from such a cruel fate as that of being slain by a dog, or a serpent, or a crocodile. Out in the midst of the desert sands he found a green spot, and there built a palace, surrounded by lovely gardens.

To this palace the prince, with a great company of servants, was carried, and here he grew up, far from all dangers of beasts or reptiles.

The prince lived in this palace, knowing nothing of the world beyond the beautiful gardens. After a time he became restless. He climbed to the roof of the palace, and looked long and wearily across the burning desert sands. There lay the desert in the white sunlight, without life, save when, here and there, a long caravan of camels stalked slowly by, far over toward the horizon.

One day, as the boy looked forth from the rooftop, behold, a strange beast ran across the desert. It was following a man who came toward the palace. The prince turned to the little page waiting upon him, and said, "What, I pray thee,

is yonder beast?"

"That," said the page, trembling, "is a dog, called a greyhound."

"I would not rob yon man of his treasure," replied the prince, "but let there be brought to me one like it."



The page ran and told this to the keeper of the palace, who sent a swift messenger to report it to the king. When the king heard it, his heart was heavy, for he felt that nothing could save the prince from the doom of the Hathors. So he said, "Take to my son a little trotter, lest his heart be sad."

Then they gave the prince a fine greyhound, but also told him of the prophecy of the Hathors. The

greyhound licked the hand of the prince. By day and night he went with him about the palace. But oftenest the boy, followed by his dog, mounted to the roof-top, there to drink in the wild and silent beauty of the desert.

THE TRAVELING OF THE PRINCE.

After a time the prince would abide in the palace no longer. He sent messengers to his father, saying, "Let me return to thee. Wherefore should I stay here? Behold, I am destined to three dooms, and if I live here, or follow my own desire, I cannot escape them. God will do what is in his heart." The king sent a caravan to the palace in the desert, and brought his son back to the city.

The crowds and throngs of the city bewildered the young prince. The throngs and crowds of his father's palace wearied and sickened him. With his greyhound, he daily visited the armories, and gained skill in the use of all sorts of weapons. But his heart longed for the silent and lonely stretches of the desert. The city life was as unpleasant to him as his lonely palace life had been.

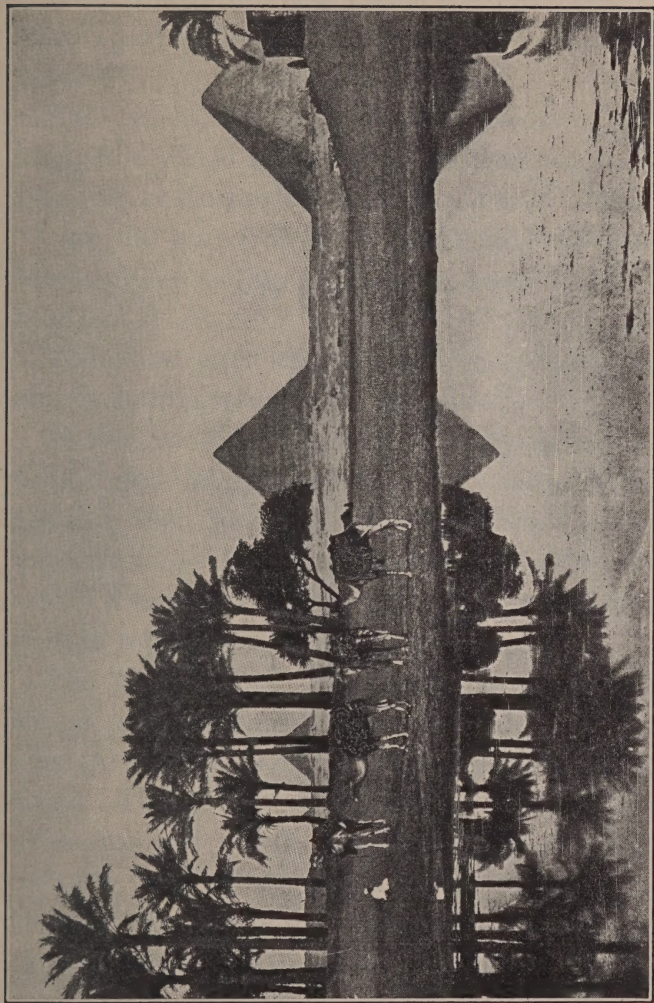
"Let me go into the world," he besought his father.

At last the king, leading him out to the east of the city where a great road led into the desert, said, "Go thou. Go, my son, whither thou wilt."

The prince embraced his father. Then, with his greyhound and camel, and armed with good weapons, he set his face toward the burning sands, and was soon far beyond the dwellings of men. For months he traveled, living in the very heart of the wilderness, and providing his own food from game which he hunted.

At last, one day, he saw lying far toward the eastern horizon a mass of blue shadow, and, riding toward it, found it to be a great city. The city was surrounded by a low wall, upon one corner of which rose a straight tower, so high that its top reached into the sky, and could not be seen from the ground.

The prince rode through the gate into the city, and went directly to the doors of the palace. Living so long in the desert, he had become ragged, unshaven, and dusty, and looked very unlike a prince. When he asked shelter and food at the palace, he was turned away. Then one of the king's officers took pity upon him, led him to his own house, and there gave him fresh clothing, good food, and a bed.



THE PYRAMIDS.

After the prince was rested and refreshed, the officer said to him, "Whence comest thou, good youth?"

The prince, remembering the hardness of the king, who would give him no shelter because of his rags, determined to hide his real position. He said, "I am the son of an officer in Egypt. Because of the hardness of my stepmother, have I fled from that land."

The officer gave him fitting clothes, and a horse, and bade him welcome to his house.

In the gardens of the officer every morning the prince saw many noble-looking youths strolling about. Then they all left and returned no more until evening. Approaching one of them, the prince said, "Where go ye every morning from the garden only to return at nightfall?"

The youth replied, "Yonder is the tower of the king's only daughter. We are princes of Syria¹ who are come hither to woo the princess in marriage. The king fears so greatly lest she should get an unworthy lover, that he has placed her in the topmost room of the tower which meets the sky. Only he who climbs the tower as far as the window of the princess may wed her. Every day we try

¹ Syria = sér-î-â.

to climb the tower, and at nightfall return in discontent, for not one of us can do it."

"Lo," said the prince, "I desire to try. To-morrow let me go with you."

In the morning he went with the other noble youths to the tower, but while they rode straight to its base and began to climb, he guided his horse out into the desert, and looking upward to the top of the tower, saw the princess sitting at the window.

The princess smiled upon the handsome prince, sitting so well upon his white horse, and in that instant her heart went out to him. "The others woo me because I am a princess," she said. "They look not for my face, but seek only to climb my tower. Yonder brave prince looks for a heart to love him. He climbs not to my tower until he sees my face."

Riding swiftly to the base of the tower, the prince laid hold, and at once climbed to the window of the princess. The nobles watched the prince until he was out of sight, and then, running to the king, proclaimed that the son of an Egyptian officer had won the hand of his daughter.

When the king heard this he was very angry, and sent servants to kill the prince, but the princess said, "In the moment that you slay him you slay me, for I will not live if he be slain."

Then the king gave the princess to the prince for his wife, and to them both he gave a city.

THE CROCODILE AND THE SERPENT.

The prince said to the princess, "At my birth the Hathors decreed that I was to die one of three deaths; by a crocodile, by a serpent, or by a dog."

"Kill then this beast speedily," cried the princess, pointing to his greyhound.

"What, and shall I slay this good friend who came to me when we were both young?" cried the prince, and would not slay the greyhound.

After a time the prince left his young wife, and set out upon a journey to Egypt to see his father. The princess, fearing greatly, sent with him a mighty warrior, who should ride behind him in silence and keep watch upon him. The prince himself knew nothing of the warrior.

At last the prince stood before that gate of his father's city which lay upon the bank of the Nile River. The sun was sinking over the land, and the gate was shut. While the prince stood waiting, out of the Nile flood crept a terrible crocodile. With huge snapping jaws, it was rushing forward toward the prince, when the mighty warrior strode forward and cut its throat with a single blow; and

the gates, swinging open, let the prince into his father's city.

In two months he returned to the city of his wife. Through the midst of this city also ran the Nile River. As the prince walked beside its bank at sundown, two great yawning jaws were suddenly raised upon him from the water. He turned swiftly aside, in time to let the mighty warrior break the jaws of the crocodile with his powerful arms. And then, for months, at the command of the princess, the mighty warrior walked the banks of the river at sunset, and let no crocodile crawl out of the water.

The princess was very happy, and she said, "Twice death came at thee from the jaws of a crocodile, and thou didst escape it. So is that doom taken by the gods out of thy life."

One day, after a festival, the prince went to his bed very tired. His wife placed a bowl of milk beside the bed, and then sat watching him as he slept. Suddenly she heard a trailing sound in the room, and, looking up, beheld a serpent about to strike at her husband. Springing forward, she placed the bowl of milk before the serpent. It was tempted by the drink and did not strike, but swallowing all the milk, was made sleepy by it, and fell in a helpless coil upon the floor. The princess,

then creeping toward the serpent with a hatchet, cut it into pieces.

Awakening her husband, she cried, "God hath



"SHE PLACED THE BOWL OF MILK BEFORE THE SERPENT."

set aside thy second doom. Arise, let us get to his altars and praise him."

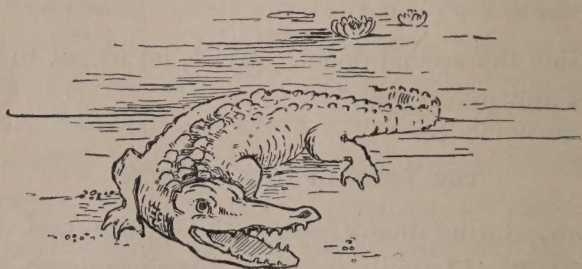
THE DOOM OF THE PRINCE.

Now, during many years, the prince and the princess lived happily together, for since death had not come by the crocodile nor by the serpent, she did not fear his faithful dog, the greyhound.

Upon a sunny day the prince walked down a long pathway of the garden, with his greyhound at his heels. The dog, suddenly scenting game upon the path, began sniffing the ground and whining, as he had done in the old days when they hunted together in the desert. The prince saw him start upon a run, and ran after him.

Fleeter than the wind sped the greyhound, and fleetly ran the prince behind him. The garden was left, and across wet rice fields they sped, to the very brink of the Nile. The dog sprang suddenly into the water, and the prince sprang after him.

Then out of the river arose the grinning jaws of a crocodile which quickly snapped together upon the prince. So the prince died at last as the Hathors had said he would, and the princess mourned him for many years.



THE TRAVELING OF CHU YUAN.¹

CHINA.

A WAY in the far East lies a great kingdom with millions upon millions of people. It is called the land of China. China is so old a country that no one can count back and tell how many hundreds of years old it is.



The Chinese are an odd-looking people, with slanting eyes and yellowish skins. They have many customs as old as their land. One of these is the worship of their ancestors. To this day they pray to their fathers and mothers, kneeling at their graves. They are proud of the fact that they never change these customs, but hand them down from father to son.

¹ Chu Yuan = chū yǔ-án.

Their ruler is called the emperor. The emperor is never seen by the common people. He lives in a palace with thousands of people to wait upon him. The palace lies within most beautiful gardens, and these are walled in by very high, thick walls. The emperor seldom travels abroad, and knows of his people only what is told him.

THE FINDING OF CHU YUAN.

Thousands of years ago there lived in China an emperor called Shun.¹ He was wise and good, and called around him wise and good men. With them he loved to roam about his palace gardens, and listen to all that they could tell him of the common life of the people.

Through the midst of the emperor's garden ran a beautiful river. On both its banks were cherry and peach trees, whose rose and snowy petals dropped into the clear water, and went sailing down the river till they came to the garden wall. Then they were whirled into little pools and slipped under an arch, out into the world.

One day the Emperor Shun became very weary of the gardens and the palace. He wandered alone by the river bank, watching the little pink and

¹ Shun = shūn.

white petal boats, as they floated down the current. Suddenly the Emperor Shun himself jumped into the river, and, being a good swimmer, swam down and down, passed under the arch, and was out in the world.

The river ran through fields of rice, and here and there the huts of fishermen dotted the shore.

At last the Emperor Shun climbed to the shore. He was wet and cold from his bath in the river. He took a little footpath and went toward the nearest fisherman's hut. There was no one in it but a little lad, who was squatted on a mat before a small fire, braiding rushes.

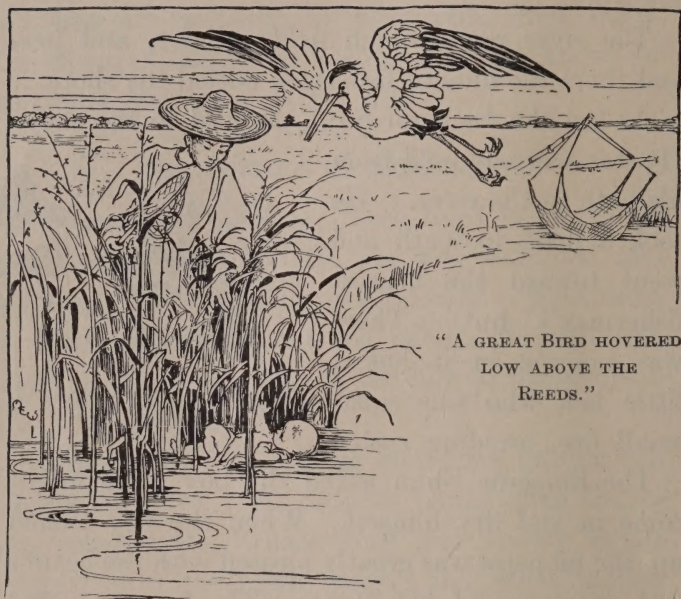


The Emperor Shun asked the boy if he might come in and dry himself. When the boy looked up, the emperor was greatly pleased with the beauty and sweetness of his glance. The boy rose, and bowing low, offered the stranger every comfort that the house afforded. They talked together of many things, and the boy's graceful wit and deep thought more and more attracted the emperor.

At twilight the fisherman came home, and seeing the stranger, bade him welcome. Then he gave

the boy some fish to broil over the fire for their supper. The emperor asked the fisherman if the lad were his son.

The fisherman replied, "Sir, he came to me even



"A GREAT BIRD HOVERED
LOW ABOVE THE
REEDS."

as you have come, I know not whence; but more strangely. One evening in the spring I heard the cranes crying as they flew northward. After the flock had passed by, I still heard the crying note of a single crane.

"I hurried out to the water side. A great bird

hovered low above the reeds, and among them lay this boy, Chu Yuan, a mere baby. When I lifted him to my arms, the crane rose high in the air with loud cries of joy."

"I pray," said the Emperor Shun, "that you give the boy to me."

The fisherman looked from the rich clothes of the stranger to the poor furniture of his miserable little hut.

"Could you send Chu Yuan to school?" he asked.

When he learned that Chu Yuan should have learning and honor, he gave him over to the stranger. Chu Yuan, in his coarse cotton dress, followed the emperor as he plunged into the water, and together they swam through the river arch, back to the gardens of the palace.

The lad was sent at once to the apartments of the prince, the eldest son of the Emperor Shun. There he was robed in softest silk, and day after day he was taught by the masters of the young prince. The prince loved Chu Yuan dearly, and, being lazy, he did not mind his outstripping him in his studies.

The lads grew into tall, slender young men. The prince was not strong, and loved to lie all day

upon silken cushions, listening to tinkling music. Chu Yuan rode abroad over the kingdom. He looked into the faces of the common people. He found out their needs. He took care that good laws should be made for them. They loved even the shadow of Chu Yuan, and kissed his footprints.

At length the Emperor Shun died, and the young prince became emperor in his stead.

THE FLIGHT OF CHU YUAN.

The young emperor now took the throne and made Chu Yuan his minister. But he still remained lazy and fond of doing nothing, so that the real power came to Chu Yuan. The nobles of the emperor's court hated Chu Yuan for this power. They hated him more for his just laws. They feared him because the common people loved him. So they whispered constantly into the emperor's ear all manner of evil against him.

Chu Yuan went his own way, and in his turn looked with scorn on all the foolish feasting and dancing of the emperor's court. The emperor's frown grew darker and darker when Chu Yuan refused to join in the gayety.

One day the emperor sent for Chu Yuan and

told him that he no longer wished him near him. He said that he had made laws of his own to replace those which Chu Yuan had made. With a heavy heart Chu Yuan left the palace at once; but, before going out into the world, he went to the grave of the Emperor Shun, there to offer prayers, as a child prays to its father. It was twilight when Chu Yuan began to pray, and the whole night long he knelt at the tomb.

At sunrise low sweet music fell upon his ears. It was strangely different music from the tinkling lutes of the palace. Chu Yuan, lifting his head, felt a gentle shower of dew fall upon his face, as though some one had brushed it with wet roses. Wonderfully refreshed and strengthened by this, he rose to his feet, and looking up into the sky, saw a band of spirits circling about the golden car of the sun, from whence came the sweet music.

As he listened with parted lips and sparkling eyes, he heard behind him the mighty rustling of wings. There above his head in the air was a great car of purest green jade, drawn by two enormous dragons. On the front of the car perched a phoenix-bird.¹

The car descended slowly until it reached Chu

¹ phoenix = fē'-niks.

Yuan. Then the phoenix-bird called, "Chu Yuan, come hither."

"Why do you say prayers?" asked the phoenix-bird.

"I leave the emperor's court forever," sadly replied Chu Yuan. "The emperor and all his people love evil wholly. I love only good. Therefore they cast me out, and I am about to wander, I know not whither."

"Those who love only good should be with God," said the phoenix-bird, fixing his sharp eyes, which glowed like clear amber, upon Chu Yuan. "Step into the car and the dragons shall bear thee upon a search for the wholly good."

THE SEARCH FOR THE WHOLLY GOOD.

Chu Yuan seated himself in the car. The moon stepped down from the high heaven, and going before the dragons, led the way. The sun moved slowly beside the car to light its path, and all the winds of heaven, clasping hands, came behind it, blowing with strong, soft breaths to speed it forward.

So traveled Chu Yuan onward and upward till he reached the clear spaces of the sky. The sky was hung with stars, glimmering like many lanterns, and through the center of it was a road of glittering star



"CHU YUAN, TREMBLING, KNOCKED AT THE WHITE GATE."

dust, called the Way to Heaven. Along this road the car ran till it came to a gate of such creamy whiteness that the eye could not bear to look upon it.

"Behold," said the phoenix-bird to Chu Yuan. "This is the gate to the palace of God. Within dwell the wholly good. Knock, and see if thou art fit to enter."

Chu Yuan, trembling, knocked at the white gate. Thrice he knocked, but it remained closed. Then a voice like that of the Emperor Shun said, "My son, within are the wholly good. This is the gate of Life; but to enter it, find first the gate of Death."

Chu Yuan reëntered the car and cried sadly to the phoenix-bird, "God has rejected me. Where now can I go?"

The phoenix-bird took him to the castle of a great wizard. The wizard told him that to learn to be wholly good one must search, and keep on searching.

Then Chu Yuan searched all the corners of the sky. He rode from one end to the other of the rainbow. He reached the hidden fountain of the Yellow River. At length, softly, slowly the car settled downward. He was upon the earth again. The dragons stopped with the car in the green rice fields, before the door of his old home, the fisherman's hut.

The old fisherman, mending his nets by the doorway, looked up and knew Chu Yüan, as he stepped from the car. "Why, my son," he cried, "why so sad of face? Art thou not minister to an emperor? Does not life content thee?"

"I am dismissed," said Chu Yuan. "They are evil, and I loved good. I would not drink with them. Therefore they dismissed me."

The fisherman shook his head. "It is not true goodness which shuns evil," he said; "but rather should you seek evil, and by living with it, lift it until it becomes good."

Chu Yuan, standing by the river's brink, was smitten to the heart by these words. He knew now why God had closed heaven against him, as the emperor had closed the palace doors. He lifted up a great stone, and clasping it in his arms, leaped into the river and was seen no more.

The fisherman ran and told the people what Chu Yuan had done, and they took boats and went out upon the river to find his body, that they might bury it with honor and say prayers at his grave. When they found that he was gone, they ran and filled tubes of bamboo with rice, and sealing them tight, flung them into the river so that Chu Yuan might find them and not

be without food upon his journey to the palace of God.

And even to this day, the memory of Chu Yuan is kept fresh in China. Every year in the month of May occurs the great Dragon Boat Festival, which is supposed to be a search for his body.



THE STORY OF RAMA.¹

THE LAND OF INDIA.



FAR away among the lands of the East lies the beautiful country of India. It is one of the oldest countries in the world. In it are cities containing millions of people, with houses, temples, and gardens of great beauty. There are mighty rivers, where the lotus flower blooms, and wild swans swim.

The mountains of India are the highest in the world. Their valleys are gardens filled with never-fading flowers, but on the mountain tops lie everlasting snows. In the forests of India the trees twine their boughs closely together, and beneath that shelter roam tigers, elephants, and gray monkeys. These forests are called jungles.

¹ Rama = rä'-mä

AYODHYA.

Thousands of years ago there was a city called Ay-od-hya.¹ Through it ran the river Su-ray-u.² Its wide and beautiful streets were lined with fine houses. Great temples lifted into the sunlight towers sparkling with gold and precious stones. Every house lay within its own fragrant gardens. Soft music floated upon the air. Every one was happy in Ay-od-hya, and every one was good. There were no poor. No one wore ragged clothes or went hungry.

The people of the city worshiped a god called Vish-nu.³ To his honor were the lovely temples built. Many other gods also had their altars in these temples, and holy men called Brahmins⁴ spent their lives in worshiping the gods. These men went out alone into the jungles and river plains, and suffered heat and cold and hunger, because of their love for the gods.

The great king of Ay-od-hya was called Da-sar-á-tha.⁵ He was wise and brave and noble, and much loved by his people. But the noble heart of Da-sar-á-tha was often filled with sorrow. He was

¹ Ay-od-hya = ī-ōd-hī'-ā.

⁴ Brahmins = brāh'-mīns.

² Su-ray-u = sū-rāy'-ū.

⁵ Da-sar-á-tha = dās-ār-ā'-thā.

³ Vish-nu = vēesh'-nū.

growing old and had no son to take his place when he should die; and he could not bear to die and leave his kingdom to be troubled by the demons.

Very often, the holy Brahmins, coming back to the city from the jungles, would tell Da-sar-á-tha of these wicked monsters who overthrew the altars and laughed at their prayers. Though these demons were so wicked, no man in Ay-od-hya dared go out to destroy them.

At last Da-sar-á-tha held a great feast in honor of the god Vish-nu. He prayed to Vish-nu for a son to rule his kingdom, and the Brahmins prayed that the demons might be destroyed.

Vish-nu heard their prayers. In time four boys were born to Da-sar-á-tha, and into them the god Vish-nu breathed his own life, so that these sons of Da-sar-á-tha were young gods. They grew very rapidly, and at sixteen all four were mighty warriors. Of these Rama was bravest and strongest.

RAMA AND THE DEMONS.

In the jungle a holy Brahmin named Vis-wa-mi-tra¹ had fought the demons until he was weary, for they were always victorious. These demons

¹ Vis-wa-mi-tra = vis-wä-mī'-trā.

were very dreadful monsters, some without heads and some without arms, and others with bodies bent and twisted horribly.

But if the demons were ill to look upon they were worse to meet. They were terrible fighters and used strange weapons. Sometimes they fought with clouds of dust, sometimes with showers of stones. They would root up trees and fling them as lightly as if they were throwing sticks, and it was nothing for a demon to pick up a mountain and hurl it at his enemy.

Vis-wa-mi-tra told all this to the king and begged that Rama be sent with him into the jungle to meet and fight the demons. Da-sar-á-tha did not like to send Rama because he was so young. At last, however, he let him go with his second son, Laksh-man.¹

Rama boldly entered the jungle with Laksh-man and Vis-wa-mi-tra. He carried with him only his magic bow and arrows. The demons at once opened fire with a few mountains and several mighty tree trunks. Rama, standing quite still, fixed arrows to the bow and shot at the mountains and trees, which at the touch of the arrow settled quietly to earth, hurting no one. Then with

¹ Laksh-man = lăksh'-măn.

another arrow he would reach the heart of a demon, killing him instantly.

For many days they wandered through the deep jungle, killing demons, till they came at last to another kingdom, called Mith-i-la,¹ where reigned King Jan-a-ka.²

Besides the great god Vish-nu, the people of India worshiped another god, quite as great and more terrible, called Siva.³ Siva sometimes came to earth, and once as he had passed through Mith-i-la he had left his great bow, which now hung in a temple.

Jan-a-ka had a beautiful daughter called Sita.⁴ When it came time for Sita to marry, he said that only the man who could bend Siva's bow might win her hand. Many had tried and failed.

Vis-wa-mi-tra took Rama to the palace of Jan-a-ka, where he met Sita and heard about the bow. He said he wished to bend it. It was so huge that it was brought to him on an eight-wheeled cart, drawn by five thousand men. Rama, stepping forth before the people, not only lifted the bow, but bending it in his hands, snapped it in pieces as if it were a twig. It broke with a noise

¹ Mith-i-la = Mith'-i-là.

³ Siva = sēē'-vā.

² Janaka = jān'-ā-kā.

⁴ Sita = sēē'-tā.

like thunder, and the shock threw the people to the earth.

So Rama married Sita and took her to Ay-od-hya.

Years went by, and as Da-sar-á-tha grew very old, he wished to give up the throne and spend his last years in peace. Since he had four sons, the time came to say who should rule in his place.

He decided to make

Rama king in his stead,

but his wife wanted it

otherwise. She wanted

Rama's brother, Bha-

rat,¹ made king. So

going to the king, she

wept and wrung her

hands until he promised, not only to make Bha-rat

king, but to send Rama to live in the jungle for

fourteen years. Bha-rat was away on a journey,

and messengers were sent to summon him.

When the people learned of Rama's banishment

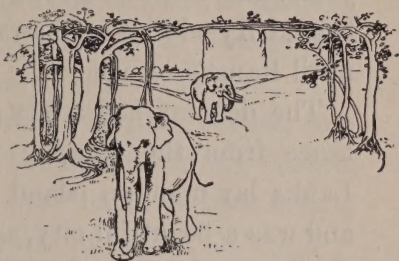
they cried bitterly, for Rama was greatly loved.

Rama himself was very calm. He made his plans

to go and live in the forest, dressed only in cloth-

ing made from the bark of trees. He wanted to

leave Sita behind, but she would not stay. So he,



¹ Bha-rat = bā'-rát.

with his brother Laksh-man, and Sita, dressed in tree bark, moved sadly through the city to its gates, the people by thousands following them.

When Bha-rat returned, he refused to be king, and went to the jungle to beg Rama to return. Rama, standing beside his hut of boughs, told Bha-rat that his father had banished him for fourteen years, and not until that time was past would he behold Ay-od-hya. Bha-rat promised to rule only until Rama's return.

The demons had a city of their own a long distance from the jungle. It was called Lanka.¹ Lanka lay upon an island of the sea far from land and was a beautiful city, as beautiful as Ay-od-hya. In it were lovely palaces and gardens, and it was guarded by millions of demons. None but they could go to Lanka, for boats were unknown. So Lanka lay safe in the blue sea.

In the center of the city was the palace of Ravan,² king of all the demons. Ravan was a demon of terrible power. He often visited the jungle to lead an army of demons against some enemy. Then he rode through the air in a golden car.

When the demons were not tormenting the Brahmins in the jungle, they were waging war with vast

¹ Lanka = lăn'-kâ.

² Ravan = rā'-văn.

tribes of monkeys, who lived among the trees, and had been created by the gods to be the enemies of the demons. There were millions and millions of monkeys, white, yellow, and green. They were divided into bands of thousands, each band being led by a monkey chief.

The great kingdom of the monkeys was ruled by a king, to whom the chiefs came for orders. Among the chiefs, the wisest and strongest was Ha-nu-man.¹ He often led the monkeys in their battles. The monkeys and demons fought terrible battles, and the monkeys often drove the demons to the borders of the sea, but as yet no chief had ever been able to make the leap across the sea to Lanka.

The demons were very angry at finding that Rama had come to live in the jungle. With his magic bow and arrows he was always able to kill them. Therefore they did not dare trouble him, but instead they worried the Brahmins more than ever. One day some Brahmins came to Rama's hut and asked him to fight the demons.

He set out, taking Laksh-man and Sita with him. They soon met in the woods a horrible giantess, who was the sister of King Ravan. She, seeing Sita, tried to kill her, but Laksh-man rushed upon

¹ Ha-nu-man = hä-nü'-mân.

the giantess and wounded her so terribly that she fled and told Ravan.

Ravan at once sent his whole army of demons against Rama. Then Rama, fearing that Sita might be hurt, hid her in a cave, and, leaving Laksh-man to guard her, went alone to fight the demons. Rama told Laksh-man on no account to leave Sita.

Down came the demon army in countless numbers, frightful to look upon, howling dreadfully, and hurling rocks, mountains, and trees upon Rama. All these he struck in mid-air with his arrows, and they fell harmless to the ground.

Ravan, seeing that battle with Rama was useless, now planned a trick. He changed one of his followers into a golden deer, spotted with silver, having silver horns like jewels, and a body glistening with precious stones.

This deer went wandering by the doorway of the cave where Sita was hidden. Rama had returned from his battle with the demons and was in the cave when Sita cried out with pleasure at the sight of the golden deer. She begged Rama to go and get it for her.

Rama picked up his bow and arrows, and charging Laksh-man not to leave Sita, chased the deer through the jungle. After a long chase Rama shot



"RAVAN SPRANG INTO HIS GOLDEN CAR."

BOSTON
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the deer, which, as it fell, cried out for help in a voice like Rama's.

Sita heard the cry, and thinking that Rama was in danger, begged Laksh-man to go to him. At first Laksh-man refused, but she urged him until he disobeyed Rama and went out into the wood.

THE SEARCH FOR SITA.

No sooner had Laksh-man gone than Ravan appeared at the door of the cave, seized Sita in his arms, sprang into his golden car which was waiting for him, and rushed away through the air toward Lanka. As she was borne along Sita cried aloud for help, and asked the birds and beasts to tell Rama where she had gone.

The king of all the birds was a great vulture. When he heard Sita cry, he flew through the air and attacked Ravan, and they fought a fearful battle. But the wicked Ravan won, and the vulture, sorely wounded, fell to the ground.

Ravan with Sita rushed on toward Lanka. As she went, showers of blossoms, falling from her hair, were scattered over the earth. Even the sun, filled with grief, hid his face, and all living things mourned.

Still Sita did not despair. Looking down upon the earth as she flew over it in Ravan's golden

chariot, she saw upon a hill five monkey chiefs. She dropped among them her golden girdle and jewels, for she thought that, if they only saw her, they would tell Rama that Ravan had stolen her. Then on, on, over mountains, over rivers, and over the sea Ravan carried her, until he came to his beautiful palace in the city of Lanka. There he shut her up and placed hideous monsters to guard her.

When Rama returned and found Sita gone he blamed Laksh-man very bitterly. Laksh-man explained that he had left Sita because she heard the cry of the deer in the tones of Rama's voice, and Rama forgave Laksh-man.

The two brothers then went forth into the jungle. Rama cried aloud and called to birds and trees and streams and the deer of the forest to tell him where his wife had gone. At length they came upon the vulture, lying at the point of death from his terrible battle. When he heard Rama's voice, he raised himself feebly, told Rama that Ravan had carried away Sita, and turning over, died.

A little later they came upon a terrible demon. He had no head, his mouth was placed below his waist, and he had a single eye in his body. He attacked the brothers, and a fierce battle was fought, but in the end he was killed.

After he had fallen, as he lay dying, he told them that this was not his real shape, but that he had taken it to frighten the Brahmins. One of them, seeing him thus, had cursed him and compelled him to keep this shape till Rama should release him. Then from his body arose a beautiful being clad in shining clothing. He advised Rama to seek help from the king of the monkeys.

The Monkey King had once asked and received certain aid from Rama, so now he sent out all his monkeys, millions upon millions of them, to search for Sita. North, south, east, and west they traveled. From the north and the east and the west came back word that Sita could not be found, but from the south, Ha-nu-man, a monkey chief, sent word that he had found her in Lanka. To the south therefore went Rama and Laksh-man, and all the monkey tribes. But when they came to the shore of the sea, there was no way of swimming or sailing to the far-away island, Lanka. It was decided that one of the monkeys must jump across the sea to the island, but who could jump so far? Many of them made long leaps, but at length Ha-nu-man proved that he could do it.

The demons, high up in the air, were watching the monkeys, and when they saw that Ha-nu-man was

able to leap to Lanka, they were furious. As he sprang from a rock, a great demon giantess flew directly in his way. She opened wide her jaws and told Ha-nu-man he must pass through her mouth before he could go any farther. Ha-nu-man made himself bigger and bigger and bigger, until he was as big as a mountain, but she opened her jaw wider and wider and wider, so that her mouth was always big enough to swallow him.

Ha-nu-man then quick as thought made himself as small as a man's thumb. Before she knew what he was doing he jumped lightly into the demon's mouth, and taking a fresh spring passed on again through the air.

When Ha-nu-man reached Lanka he changed himself into a common cat and searched the city for Rama's wife. In the garden of Ravan's palace he at length found her. She was guarded by fierce demons of frightful shapes, some without ears, some with ears hanging down to their feet; some with only one eye, some with long necks covered with hair; some very large, some very small; some with faces of buffaloes, others with heads of hogs or swine. Amongst these fearful forms poor Sita sat weeping.

Ha-nu-man, still in the form of a cat, climbed

one of the trees and perched upon a limb, where, hidden by the leaves, he waited a chance to speak to her.



SITA AND HA-NU-MAN IN THE GARDEN.

Soon this chance came. When the guards were at a distance, he crept down from the tree, and calling softly, told her who he was, and that he had come to rescue her. He gave her Rama's ring to

prove the truth of what he said. He offered to take her on his shoulders and carry her across the seas. She was afraid, and would not go with him, but she gave him a ring to carry to Rama.

Before leaving Lanka, Ha-nu-man destroyed its beautiful gardens and angered the demons terribly. Then, with another wonderful leap, he reached the monkey army and Rama.

Upon receiving Sita's ring Rama decided at once to take the city of Lanka. But now the question arose, How could they cross the sea? First, Rama shot one of his wonderful arrows into the water, hoping to dry up the sea. Great waves rolled and boiled, but the sea was still there.

Then the king of the ocean, with a company of glittering sea serpents, rose above the waves. He spoke to Rama with great respect, but told him that a dry path could not be made through the sea. He advised that a bridge be built from the mainland to Lanka. This was done, and the entire army passed over the sea to the island.

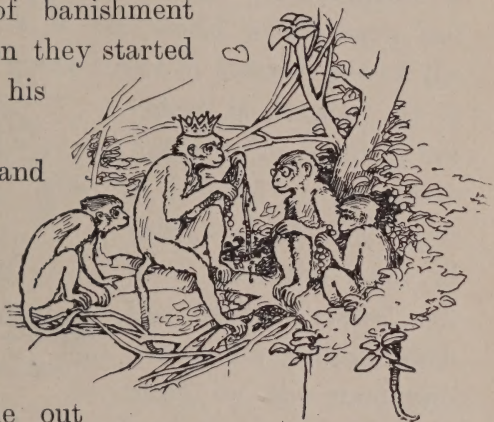
Then was fought a terrible battle. For days and nights it lasted. At length Ravan, with all his hosts of chariots, elephants, horses, and men, came out of the city, thinking to make an end of his enemies. But the king of all the gods sent from

heaven his war chariot to Rama, who, with one of his magic arrows, killed Ravan.

RAMA RETURNS TO AY-OD-HYA.

Rama, taking Sita from Lanka, returned to his hut in the jungle, where he dwelt in calm till his fourteen years of banishment were over. Then they started homeward to his father's city.

When Rama and Sita drew near to Ay-od-hya a sound of merry music greeted them, and the whole city came out



to meet them. Happy maidens strewed grains of rice and gold beneath their feet. A long train of thankful Brahmins led them to the king's palace. Bha-rat came forth, and kneeling, gladly gave up the kingdom to Rama, his brother. To every monkey chief King Rama gave rich gifts, and they went home to their jungle content. And thereafter in Ay-od-hya,

“Unknown were want, disease, and crime,
So calm, so happy, was the time,”

for Rama, with Sita, his sweet wife, ruled in peace
for many years.

THE WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF RUSTEM.¹

PERSIA.

AMONG the old countries of the world which have had great honor in history, one of the oldest is Persia. It is not a large country, but it is noted for its mountains, which for ages have been the home of the hardy Persian soldiers. Its valleys, sheltered by the mountain



slopes, are blooming gardens of flowers.

Many hero tales have come down to us from the land of Persia, and among them are these wonderful adventures of Rustem.

ZAL, THE FATHER OF RUSTEM.

In Persia, thousands of years ago, there dwelt a great warrior called Sam Suwar.² Not only was

¹ Rustem = rūst'-ēm.

² Sam Suwar = sāme sū'-wāre.

he brave in leading the armies of Persia to victory, but he himself had won splendid battles fighting demons.

After a time a little son was born to Sam Suwar, whom his wife named Zal.¹ The father was filled with joy at the thought of having a son who should become a great warrior in his place. But when they brought Zal to him and laid him in his arms, he was frightened. The baby's hair was silvery white.

The people began to whisper that this white-haired child would bring ill luck to Sam Suwar, and as the boy grew, and still had curls of snowy whiteness, his father would not allow him to be brought into his presence. At last, so sure was he that Zal would bring evil to his house, that he made up his mind to be rid of him.

Persia is a land of rough mountains, with valleys and lowlands of delight and beauty. The mountains lift their rocky peaks, high and lonely, into the blue Persian sky. On a cliff upon the side of a steep mountain dwelt a giant bird, called the Simurgh.² Her feathers were pure gold, and so large was she that she carried elephants in her claws for her young to feed on.

¹ Zāl = zail.

² Simurgh = sī'-mûrg.

Her nest was hidden in a cleft of a great white stone cliff, streaked with veins of golden quartz. Strewn about the nest lay thousands of rubies, amethysts, and topazes, which glowed and gleamed like fires, and were dearly loved by the Simurgh.

One very dark night, when storm clouds were folding their black wings around the mountain of the Simurgh, and the stars of the sky were hidden, a voice out of heaven called softly to the great bird:—

“Simurgh, to thine own care is given a mortal. Protect him; for when he has become a man he will have a son who will be the champion of the world.”

The Simurgh, after listening to the voice, peered over the edge of the rocks, and saw Sam Suwar climbing the mountain with Zal in his arms. The nestlings of the old mother bird were gathered warmly under her soft feathers, and she watched with anger this human father, who laid his baby upon the cold bare rocks to die.

As soon as Sam Suwar had gone, the Simurgh flew straight down to poor little Zal. Down, down, swept the great wings, and Zal, looking up in wonder, reached out his helpless hands to her with a smile. The tender mother bird fastened her talons

carefully in his little robe, and floated upward with him to her nest, circled with its stones of fire.

A sweet, well-known note caused her own nestlings to cling more closely together, and into the



ZAL IN THE SIMURGH'S NEST.

warm space thus made, little Zal crept, cuddling under the golden feathers, safe from the fierce storm that swept over the mountain.

The next morning, when the sunlight touched the white cliff and lighted up the fires of the ruby and amethyst, the Simurgh was awakened by a

strange cry beneath her breast, and she remembered her human nestling. Rising on her strong wings, she went forth to find food for the stranger babe.

Every day she fed Zal before her own little ones were attended to, and the nestlings learned from their mother to be kind to Zal. As soon as they could fly, they, too, searched and found food for him.

So, year after year, he lived in the Simurgh's nest, and played with the rough jewels on the mountain crag.

Meanwhile Zal's mother, in the palace down in the valley, was breaking her heart with grief for the loss of her boy. Sam Suwar, too, drooped his head for shame, as he thought of his cruelty to his only son. One night he dreamed of Zal, grown to be a young man, and thought he saw him leading a troop of soldiers, while his white locks floated upon the wind. Awaking with a cry, Sam Suwar called his wise men to him, and they said the dream showed that Zal was alive.

Early in the morning the father went to the lonely mountain, and climbing up toward its cliffs, bemoaned his child and prayed the gods to give him back. His cry rose up to the Simurgh's nest

among its stones of fire, and the Simurgh shook her golden feathers as she looked lovingly down upon the white-haired child who played with the gems, upon the cliff beneath her.

Rising from her nest, she nestled down beside him, and while he stroked her feathers, she caressed him with her beak, and said, "I have fed and protected thee, but now the Persian warrior has come for his boy, and I must give thee up."

The child wept and flung his arms about the soft neck of his foster mother, but the Simurgh told him he must return to his own. Then, taking him in her talons, she swept slowly down, in graceful circles, toward the wondering father.

"Receive thy son," said the glorious bird. "He is worthy of a crown and a throne."

Sam Suwar gladly caught his child in his arms and carried him home to his mother, who wept tears of joy as she clasped him to her breast.

Zal grew up to be a warrior even greater than his father, and in course of time he married a princess. To them, one day, came a baby boy, strong and beautiful, whom they called Rustem.

Zal was now the greatest warrior in the kingdom. Rustem, his son, grew to be so large that he was taller than his father. So strong was he that his

strength was as the strength of ten, and in his hands the battle-ax was a feather.

No horse in his father's stables was fleet enough for Rustem. But one day he met a wild horse from the kingdom of the demons, and this horse, Rakush,¹ he himself tamed, and rode ever after. When the king of Persia sent Zal to fight either the Tartars or the demons, Rustem always rode beside him, and many a fierce and bloody battle they waged together against the enemies of Persia.

THE FOLLY OF KAI-KAUS.²

The king who had ruled Persia since the boyhood of Zal now died, and a new king, Kai-Kaus, came to the throne. He was very weak and foolish, and often disgusted his people by his great pride, and love of himself.

One day, as he was sitting in his rose garden, a demon appeared before him disguised as a traveling musician. He sang a song of a wonderful land, Ma-zin-der-an,³ which was more beautiful than any other land under the sun. This land was really under the protection of the White

¹ Rakush = rä'-küsh.

² Kai-Kaus = kī-kā'-ūs.

³ Mazinderan = mā-zīn'-dēr-ān''.

Demon, who wished to lead Kai-Kaus there, that he might destroy him.

Kai-Kaus dreamed of Ma-zin-der-an until at length he made up his mind to conquer the kingdom. When he called Zal and Rustem to him, both warned him not to go against demons. But Kai-Kaus would not hearken. He gathered a great army together, and leaving Zal and Rustem at home to keep order in Persia, he set out for Ma-zin-der-an.

When Kai-Kaus drew near to the kingdom, he put up a tent for himself in a safe place, and then sent forward two thousand fighting men with fire and sword, to take the land. The king of Ma-zin-der-an, insulted at this terrible invasion of the Persian king, with whom he had had no quarrel, called to the White Demon for aid. That night storm clouds rolled over the Persian host, and awful hailstones pelted down upon them.

The next morning found the troops frightened and scattered, while Kai-Kaus and his leading warriors had become stone blind. They were all taken prisoners and led to dungeons in Ma-zin-der-an; but before Kai-Kaus was locked in, he managed to send a messenger to Zal.

Zal was very angry when he learned of all the

folly of Kai-Kaus, but still, as he was king of Persia, he felt bound to save him. He called Rustem to him, and, telling him the story, said, "My son, since Kai-Kaus lies bound a captive in a demon's land, thou and Rakush must go to deliver him. Ma-zin-der-an lies far from Persia. There are two roads to it; one is long, but safe; the other shorter, and beset by many dangers. Lions, demons, and dragons lie in wait upon it."

Rustem instantly chose the shorter road. He saddled Rakush, put on his armor, and, tenderly kissing his mother, rode away to release Kai-Kaus.

RUSTEM AND RAKUSH.

Rustem and Rakush set out together along a hot, dusty road, and after traveling two days reached a gloomy forest, in which grazed herds of wild asses. Drawing his spear, Rustem chased and killed one of these animals, and then, building a fire, he roasted a portion of the meat upon the point of his spear. Rakush quietly grazed near by. Having satisfied his hunger, Rustem lay down beside the fire, and putting his sword under his head, went to sleep.

The smell of roasted flesh meanwhile attracted a

deadly enemy, and as Rustem slept, a pair of fiery eyeballs gleamed out of the dark wood, beside the dying fire. Rakush scented danger, and stepped a little nearer his sleeping master. He waited for the attack, and soon a large lion bounded from the underbrush.

The beast would have struck Rustem, but he was received with a terrific and well-aimed kick that sent him back into the bushes. Before the lion had time to recover from his surprise, Rakush was upon him, and stamped his life out. Rustem, awakening, called Rakush, and the horse, after nosing the lion to make sure he was dead, leapt to his master's side.

Rustem put his arms about the faithful horse's neck, and said: "Rakush, thou wert foolish to fight a lion alone. Suppose thou hadst been killed. Who, then, would have carried thy master through his many dangers? Next time, brave Rakush, do not fight thyself, but neigh a warning into Rustem's ear."

Next morning they started out together to cross a burning desert, where the very sand seemed grains of fire. Both horse and rider suffered terrible thirst. Rustem at last could bear it no longer, and seeing in the distance a poor desolate sheep, he followed it to a little green spot, whence sprung a rill of water.

As night was coming on, he decided to sleep beside this well of water, and calling Rakush to him ere he lay down, he said, "My steed, do not risk thine own life again. If danger approaches, neigh in my ear."

The hours slipped by to midnight, and Rustem, weary with the day's suffering, slept soundly. Rakush's sharp ear suddenly caught a sound. He listened. Looking keenly into the darkness, he saw an awful dragon slowly creeping toward them. He stooped and neighed in Rustem's ear, but Rustem slept on. This dragon was a terrible creature, whom neither lion, elephant, nor demon dared fight.

Rakush now neighed again, and the noise so startled the dragon that he slid away. Rustem, awakening this time, saw nothing, and scolded Rakush for his foolish fears. A second time the faithful horse caught the gleam of the snaky eyes, and again he aroused Rustem. Rustem this time, seeing nothing, spoke sharply to Rakush, and the poor horse turned humbly away. But he still kept a sharp outlook into the darkness.

Again the dragon appeared, this time gliding very swiftly, and Rakush, neighing and snorting, tore up the earth in his efforts to waken his master. Rustem sprang angrily to his feet, and was about to

punish Rakush, when he too saw the gleam of the snaky eyes. Drawing his sword, he rushed upon the dragon.

The battle was fierce and bloody. When Rakush saw the great coils of the dragon folding about his master, with a loud snort he leapt upon the monster, and bit and tore his scaly hide. The dragon flung up his head to find this new foe, and quick as thought Rustem cut it off. Then he caressed the noble Rakush, and asked his pardon for his ill temper; and master and horse rested in peace till dawn.

Next day they left the desert and entered a most beautiful country. The south wind laden with spicy odors fanned their cheeks, rippling streams of water banked by purple and golden blossoms gladdened their eyes, and at last a table, laden with most tempting food, lay spread across their pathway. Rustem, weary and hungry, dismounted when he saw the table. Behind it stood a lovely maiden singing a sweet song, and holding out a cup of purple wine to him.

For one moment, one dangerous moment, Rustem wavered. He was about to stretch forth his hand to take the cup and drink the wine, when suddenly he bethought himself. Drawing his sword, he cried,



"RAKUSH LEAPT UPON THE MONSTER."



"Away, away, witch-woman!" With a wild cry, the woman disappeared, and with her the table and wine cup, and Rustem was saved. The woman was a demon, and the wine poisoned.

Rakush next carried his master forward through a wonderful land, all darkness, to another land of light. There they were mistaken for demons, and a warrior named Aulad¹ and his men came out to fight them. Rustem won the battle and



captured Aulad, whom he used as a guide to lead him forward to the land of the White Demon.

Now the two rode forth, resting neither day nor night, and at last in the evening drew rein on the fatal battlefield where Kai-Kaus had been overcome. Rustem, watching through the darkness, saw the demon fires burning about the hills of Ma-zin-der-an, but he lay down and slept soundly with Rakush at his side.

¹ Aulad = aw'-lāde.

In the morning he arose and called out the demon chief who had captured Kai-Kaus. And in a deadly fight Rustem slew him.

RUSTEM SLAYS THE DEMONS.

Led by Aulad, Rustem now rode into Ma-zin-der-an to the place where King Kai-Kaus and his generals lay blind and helpless. They received him with great joy. Kai-Kaus told Rustem of a gloomy mountain, behind which the demons lived with their leader, the White Demon.

Rustem, girding on his armor, hastened bravely to this mountain. He waited until hot noonday, when the demon horde lay sleeping. Then, rushing upon them single-handed, with his sword he slew them by thousands.

At length, as he chased and slew the demons, Rustem saw advancing upon him the White Demon himself. His eyes were flaming fire, and he was covered with long white hair. In his hand he carried a stone. Seeing Rustem, he called out proudly, "Who art thou? I would not destroy a nameless thing!"

Rustem answered, "My father is Zal, son of Sam Suwar, and I am Rustem, come to fight thee."

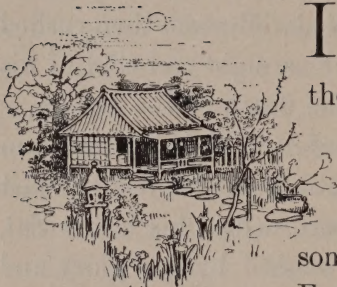
At the name of Sam Suwar the demon cringed with fear. None the less he hurled the rock at Rustem, who, avoiding it, drew his sword, and cut off one of the monster's huge legs. Then the battle began. It was terrific, and sweat and blood mingled together as the great warriors struggled. At last Rustem, lifting the demon in his arms, flung him over a cliff, and he rolled down dead. Rustem then rushed away to King Kai-Kaus, whose sight and that of his officers were restored by the death of the demon.

Kai-Kaus returned in safety to Persia. Rustem stayed in Ma-zin-der-an until he had killed the last of the demons, and then returned to his father Zal, whose old age was made blessed by the glory and fame of his son throughout the world.



THE STORY OF SUSANO.¹

JAPAN.



IN the far East, lying in the Pacific Ocean, are the islands of Japan. Here live a people called the Japanese. They are a yellow-skinned • people, somewhat like the Chinese.

For thousands of years these people believed in gods and goddesses, of whom very queer and strange stories have been told.

This is the story of the creation of Japan. To-day the Japanese people hold very different beliefs, although they love their old stories.

THE BEGINNING OF THINGS.

In the beginning, the earth and the sea lay silent and without life, and heaven lay above them. Between heaven and earth was a bridge of mist of

¹ Susano = sū-sä'-nōō.

many colors. This bridge hung in the air; one end rested upon the sea and the other touched heaven.

By and by, in the waters of the earth sprang up tall reeds; these reeds became gods, who ran up the rainbow bridge to heaven. Most of the gods climbed far into heaven and were never heard of more.

One god, I-za-na-mi,¹ did not go up into heaven; but rising with his wife, I-za-na-gi,² from the wet reed marshes of the earth, he stood upon the rainbow bridge and looked down on the world. Bending over, I-za-na-mi touched it with his coral-pointed spear, and made the first dry land appear. This was an island of Japan. He and I-za-na-gi then went down and walked over all the island.

This god had strong and beautiful children. His daughter, Am-er-at-su,³ he sent to dwell in the sun. She was lovely to behold. Inside the sun she had her home, and there she and her maidens sat and spun sunbeams.

I-za-na-mi had two sons, one quiet and peaceful, who went to live in the moon. The other was sent to rule the winds, the clouds, and the sea. This was the god Susano. When his sister, Am-er-at-su, was sent to the sun, Susano was angry,

¹ I-za-na-mi = ē-zä-nä'-mī.

² I-za-na-gi = ē-zä-nä'-gī.

³ Am-er-at-su = äm-ēr-ät'-sü.

because he had wished to be sent there himself. He rolled up great storms with purple-black clouds,



"FAIRY FINGERS SPUN SUNSHINE."

and in many ways tried to annoy his sister, Amer-at-su.

Within the palace of the sun goddess were thousands of busy looms, made of gold and jeweled with diamonds. At each loom sat a sun maiden

in shining garments, whose fairy fingers spun sunshine. Am-er-at-su took the golden threads and flung them over heaven and earth, where they shed life and warmth. Every one in earth and heaven loved Am-er-at-su.

Susano, from his home in the cold, wet sea, watched the floods of golden sunshine with angry eyes. Sitting upon his waves, he would snatch the falling sunbeams and dip them into the sea. There they mingled with the drops of water, and then rose again in soft floating mist, which Susano, blowing with his breath into clouds, sent upward to the sky. Sometimes, when Susano was peaceful, the clouds were rosy or golden. But when his thoughts were ill, they were dark and gloomy.

In the sun palace the maidens watched daily for the clouds of Susano, and when great masses of angry black ones put out the sun's light, there was sadness in the palace of Am-er-at-su.

SUSANO MAKES MISCHIEF.

One day Susano, floating sulkily upon the waters of the ocean, caught the sunbeams upon his fingers and twisted and braided them into long, golden ropes, which hung from the sun to the sea. Laughing to himself, Susano sprang to his feet, caught

hold of the golden ropes, and began to climb rapidly to the sun.

The sun maids first knew of his coming by the jarring of their looms. Before they could close their windows to keep him out, Susano had sprung in upon them. Howling and roaring, and jumping upon the looms, he broke their threads, scattered spindles and distaffs, and sent the maidens flying to all the corners of the earth.

Now Am-er-at-su, insulted and injured, shut herself in a deep cave, and no coaxing could bring her out. His father, I-za-na-mi, in great anger, caught hold of Susano and flung him far out upon an island of the sea.

When Am-er-at-su left the sun it ceased to shine. The whole world grew dark, and great black clouds covered the sky. Below the sea, in the underworld, lived millions of evil spirits who hated the light. These now swarmed up to earth and filled all the air with their wicked buzzing.

The good spirits were obliged to fly from them, and they went far up into the sky, to that glimmering path of star dust called the Milky Way. In the star fields of the Milky Way they sat down to think out a plan by which Am-er-at-su might be led to return to the sun.

Am-er-at-su was very fond of dress. When she lived in the sun she was always robed most beautifully. She also loved to be told that she was the fairest of all the goddesses. She knew that no goddess was half so fair, and yet, fearing constantly that one might be born lovelier than herself, she always went to look at any goddess who was called beautiful.

The gods planted hemp and paper mulberry, and from their bark made Am-er-at-su fine clothes. They found rubies and diamonds and strung them into necklaces and earrings. The carpenter god built a great sparkling palace. And, last, the blacksmith god hammered out of iron a large and shining mirror. This mirror was oval in shape, and so large that the full size of a god or goddess could be seen in it.



The gods took all these things and flew with them through the darkness down to earth. There they built a great fire of cherry wood, and into it flung the shin bone of a deer. Then they gathered about the fire to watch the bone. If it cracked,

Am-er-at-su would return to the sun ; if it remained whole, she would not leave her cave. After a while the shin bone cracked into a thousand pieces.

Among the gods was a merry little goddess called U-zu-mé.¹ She was full of songs and laughter, and among all the gods and goddesses she was the most beautiful dancer. U-zu-mé, laughing and singing, now led the way to Am-er-at-su's cave. The god Strong Arms pulled up a tree by the roots, and standing it beside Am-er-at-su's door, they hung upon it all the presents of dresses and gems.

Then they kindled a bonfire so great that it shed its golden light out into the inky darkness. The gods sat round the fire, and, taking their harps, struck up a charming melody.

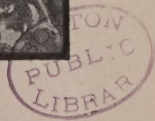
Am-er-at-su's door was a huge rock in the mouth of the cave. Before it they built a hollow platform, and on this placed the mirror. As the gods struck their harps, U-zu-mé sprang upon the platform and began the mirror dance.

In the dark hollow cave the sun goddess Am-er-at-su sat with her maidens, sad and gloomy. For days she had heard only the cries and howls of the evil spirits, so that when she caught the sound of the music of harps she lifted her head and listened.

¹ U-zu-mé = ū-zü'-me.



"AM-ER-AT-SU STEPPED OUT OF THE CAVE."



Next she heard the springing sound of U-zu-mé's dancing, and at length a mighty shout of laughter from the gods themselves. Am-er-at-su, lonely and miserable, could stand it no longer. Softly she crept to her rock door and pushed it open.

When U-zu-mé saw the door opening she sprang to the mirror, and, pushing it in front of her, waited. Soon Am-er-at-su called to her in a soft voice to know why she was dancing so merrily.

"I dance," said U-zu-mé, "because the gods have found a goddess more beautiful than you."

"Is she here?" asked Am-er-at-su, peeping out of the door.

"She stands before you," said U-zu-mé, pushing the mirror so that Am-er-at-su could see her own glorious beauty in it.

Frightened to behold another goddess so lovely, Am-er-at-su stepped out of the cave.

In an instant the gods ran forward and closed the door. Then they told Am-er-at-su of their loving trick, and begged her so tenderly, that she agreed to go back to the sun again. There her maidens began spinning sunbeams, and the dark world once more shone with light.

SUSANO SLAYS THE SERPENT.

Susano, while the world was in darkness, lived alone upon his island, thinking of what he had done. He grew very sorry as the days went by and his sister did not return to the sun. At last he saw once more its beautiful beams, and knew that Am-er-at-su had been led back by the gods.

So ashamed was he now of his ill deed, that he kept entirely away from the gods, and went alone by himself to a wild land, where he wandered to and fro among the mountains and valleys, seeing no one.

One day, when Susano was walking along the bank of a river, he saw floating upon the stream a pair of chopsticks. By these he knew that somewhere near people must be living. Hurrying up the valley, he came upon an old man and an old woman and their child, a lovely young girl. All three were weeping bitterly.

When Susano saw the little maid, who was called the Princess I-na-da,¹ his heart went out to her. He spoke to her father, who was the earth god, Ashi,² and asked him why they wept.

“You must know,” cried Ashi, “that I am lord

¹ I-na-da = ē-nä'-dā.

² Ashi = āsh'-ī.

of this country, and once had eight daughters, each as lovely as the Princess I-na-da. One day a terrible serpent with eight heads trailed up our valley, and seizing one of my daughters, swallowed her.

"Again and again it came, each time seizing and devouring a princess, until now only the youngest, I-na-da, remains. We weep now, for we know by the sound that the serpent is again coming to the valley."

"How looks this serpent?" asked Susano.

"It has eight fearful heads, but only one body," replied Prince Ashi. "It has eight tails, and forests grow upon its back. It trails over eight mountains and through eight valleys."

"Do not fear this serpent any longer," said Susano. "Give me the Princess I-na-da for my wife, and I will slay the serpent."

"But one gives not his daughter to become the wife of a stranger," replied Ashi. "Who are you?"

"I am Susano, brother to Am-er-at-su, goddess of the sun," said Susano.

"Then take I-na-da," cried Ashi, pushing the maiden forward, where she fell upon her knees at Susano's feet.

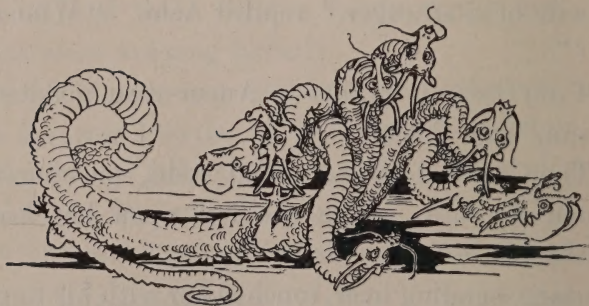
Susano, bending over, touched her with his finger,

and she changed at once into a large wooden comb. This he took and stuck into his topknot. I-na-da was thus not only out of the way of the serpent, but out of Susano's way, so that he might meet and slay the monster.

Susano next looked about him over the rice fields. Asking Ashi and his wife to help him, he gathered heaps of rice. Then he made from the rice a liquor called sake,¹ and filled eight jars with it. They next built a fence, and in front of it placed a bench, upon which they set the eight jars filled with sake. Whoever drank this liquor was thrown into a deep sleep.

By and by all the valleys and mountains resounded with a great roar, and up them trailed the eight-headed monster, looking for I-na-da. Susano

¹ Sake = sä'-kē.



and Ashi and his wife hid in a thicket of bamboo. The serpent, stretching all its heads to find I-na-da, saw the eight jars filled with drink. At once it plunged a head into each jar and drank until all the sake was gone. The strong rice liquor soon put the serpent to sleep, and it lay with its eight heads upon eight mountains.

Susano, drawing his sword, went from mountain to mountain cutting off the monster's heads, till the serpent lay dead. Then he cut the great body into pieces to free the valleys from it. As he chopped at one of the tails, suddenly his sword struck something very hard, which broke it into pieces.

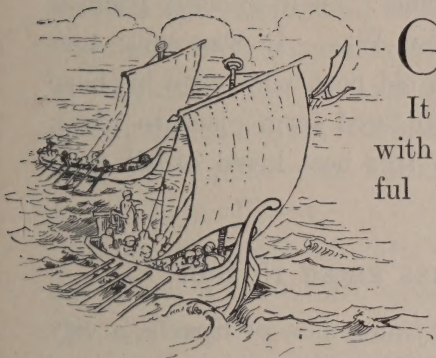
Susano, stooping down, saw that he had broken his sword upon a piece of metal in the serpent's tail. He drew the metal forth, and it proved to be another sword, far larger and stronger than his own. The hilt was crusted with lovely jewels. Swinging it about his head, Susano ran down the valley to tell Ashi that the serpent would no longer trouble him.

Ashi and his wife thanked Susano with tears of joy for his timely help. They built a great palace for him, and in it he and his wife I-na-da lived happily together, caring for her old parents.

The sword hung upon the palace wall. When Susano's oldest son went out to fight in the world, he carried his father's sword. And this same sword has been handed down among the descendants of Susano, from father to son, until this day, when it hangs in the palace of the Emperor of Japan, as one of his most precious treasures.

THE HERO ACHILLES.¹

GREECE.



GREECE is a country of southern Europe.

It is a lovely peninsula, with thousands of beautiful islands, encircled by the waters of the blue Ægean² Sea.

Centuries ago there dwelt in the land a people whose stories of their gods and goddesses make stirring hero tales. Upon the cloud-crowned summit of Olympus dwelt their great god, Zeus.³ There also lived Apollo, the sun-god; Aphrodite,⁴ goddess of beauty; Athene,⁵ Zeus's daughter, and the goddess of all wisdom. There also lived the proud and haughty Hēra,⁶ wife of Zeus himself.

Seated upon Olympus, these gods looked down upon the people of Greece, and very often took

¹ Achilles = ā-kil'-lēz.

² Ægean = e-gē'-an.

³ Zeus = zūse.

⁴ Aphrodite = āf-rō-dī'-tē.

⁵ Athene = ā-thē'-nē.

⁶ Hera = hē'-rā.

part in their affairs. The wing-footed god, Hermes,¹ with his wand of serpents, was their messenger to men. Often they themselves took human shape and walked the earth.

Stories of their god-heroes were woven by the Greeks into lovely poems. Their greatest poem is the story of the Trojan War. It was sung ages ago by Homer, a blind old poet, who, with his harp upon his shoulder, wandered from place to place, singing to the people this best loved of all their myths.

PARIS CARRIES HELEN TO TROY.

One day the noble young men of Sparta, a city of Greece, were celebrating a feast in the palace of the king. It was the wedding feast of their young King Menelaus,² and to it had come the bravest warriors and the noblest youths of all Greece. Among them was Agamemnon,³ who was king of another country, and the brother of King Menelaus. Achilles, known as the bravest hero of all Greece, was there. And with them were Ulysses,⁴ wisest among men, and Ajax, the strongest.

The bride of King Menelaus was called Helen.

¹ Hermes = hēr'-mēz.

³ Agamemnon = äg-ä-mēm'-nön.

² Menelaus = mēn-ē-lā'-ūs.

⁴ Ulysses = ū-lis'-sēz.

She was the most beautiful of all women, and all the princes of Greece had sought her hand in marriage. But from them all she had chosen Menelaus, and now, as they were gathered at the wedding feast, the princes made a solemn vow to defend Menelaus and his bride against all attacks of their enemies.

At this feast was a man younger and fairer than all the rest. He was not a Greek, but had come across the seas from Troy, a noble city far to the east. His name was Paris. He was the son of Priam, king of Troy.

When he was a lad Paris was tending sheep one day upon a mountain called Mount Ida. There the goddess Venus came to him and promised him that his wife should be the most beautiful woman in the world. When he saw the fair Helen at the wedding feast, he was overcome by her beauty, and said to himself, "Surely she is the most beautiful woman in the world. She must be the one of whom the goddess told me."

So he wickedly resolved to steal Helen away from her home and take her back with him to Troy. One day soon after, Menelaus with his friends went out hunting, and while they were gone Paris seized Helen, put her aboard his ship, and sailed away to Troy.

When King Menelaus returned and found that Helen was gone, great was his anger. He called together the noble warriors who had sworn to defend him, and asked them to take ship with him for Troy. Every one appeared but Achilles. The mother of Achilles did not want him to go, for she feared he would be killed. So she dressed him as a girl and hid him at the court of King Lycomedes.¹

When he was a little baby, the mother of Achilles had dipped him into the sacred river Styx. She had been told that if she did this no weapon could hurt him. While she dipped him, she held him so that one heel was not covered by the water, and this heel was the only part of his body in which Achilles could be hurt.

King Menelaus sent the wise Ulysses to bring Achilles. Ulysses could not find him with his mother, and he suspected that she had hidden him. So he went to the court of Lycomedes dressed as a peddler, having for sale girls' ornaments; mixed with these were a few spearheads and arrows. The maidens crowded about Ulysses to buy his wares, but one, taller and fairer than the rest, put forth a hand and seized the spearheads and arrows. Ulysses now knew

¹ Lycomedes = lī-cō-mē'-dēz.

Achilles, and begged him to go to Troy with the warriors.

Achilles gladly flung off his girl's dress and went



“THE MAIDENS CROWDED ABOUT ULYSSES.”

in the ships to Troy. With him went the hero Patroclus, who was his dearest friend.

Paris carried Helen to the palace of his father, Priam, king of Troy. When good King Priam

saw her and learned what his son Paris had done, he was sad. He called to him his oldest son, Hector, the bravest prince in all Troy. Priam told Hector of Paris's wicked deed, and said that Menelaus would surely come to make war upon them because of it. They began therefore to make ready to defend themselves and the city. They closed all the city gates and made the walls as strong as they could, for in those days all cities had high walls built about them to keep out their enemies.

THE WAR AGAINST TROY.

Before long Menelaus came, and with him came King Agamemnon and Achilles and Ajax and the other princes, with a great army of Greeks. They drew their boats upon the shore and pitched their tents under the walls of Troy.

Then began a fierce war. Ten long years it lasted, and neither side was able to conquer the other, for on both sides were great armies with brave princes to lead them. The Greeks could not take the city so long as Hector defended it, and the Trojans could not drive the Greeks away while Achilles was their leader.

At length a terrible sickness broke out among the Greeks, and their soldiers died by thousands.

They sent a messenger to ask a great prophet the cause of this pestilence. He told them that the god Apollo was very angry with them because of something which King Agamemnon had done.

It was now found out that Agamemnon had taken as a slave a Greek girl, who was the daughter of one of the priests of Apollo. She was called Chryseis.¹ Her father had sent messengers to Agamemnon, bearing offers to pay him a large sum of money if he would let Chryseis go. Agamemnon refused. Then the gods were angry; and the prophet said that the dreadful sickness would never leave the Greeks until Agamemnon returned Chryseis to her mourning father.

Agamemnon was terribly angry when he heard this, and at first refused; but his people were dying, and he could no longer resist. At last he said, "I will give up Chryseis if Achilles will give me his slave Briseis² whom he has lately captured."

Then Achilles was angry and refused to give up his slave. Agamemnon, however, was king and could do as he pleased, so he gave up the beautiful Chryseis and took Achilles' slave, Briseis, to wait upon him in her stead. The sickness at once ceased, but Achilles would no longer lead

¹ Chryseis = kri-sē'-is.

² Briseis = brī-sē'-is.

the Greeks against the Trojans. He went off and sulked in his tent.

Then defeat came to the Greeks. Hector led the Trojans against them, drove them to the shore of the sea, and set fire to their ships.

The Greeks in sorrow sent messenger after messenger to Achilles in his tent, telling him of the Trojan victories and begging him to

lead his people once more.

But he would not stir.

At length the brave Patroclus¹ came to him. Achilles loved Patroclus as if he were his brother, but even Patroclus could not persuade him. So,

putting on Achilles' armor, Patroclus led the Greeks in battle. He

thought that the Trojans, seeing the armor of their dreaded enemy, would flee in fear. Hector, however, took him to be Achilles, and far from fearing him, rushed upon him and killed him. They carried the news to Achilles in his tent.

Achilles was sitting, sullen and motionless, when

¹ Patroclus = păt rō'-clūs.



the messenger entered to tell him that Patroclus had been slain. At the news his grief and rage were terrible. He sprang up, and with a cry like the roar of a lion, called for his armor, that he might go and fight the Trojans. But there was no armor for him. Patroclus had worn it when he went to battle and had lost it with his life. Then dreadful indeed was the wrath of Achilles.

His fury frightened even his mother, Thetis, who was a goddess. She went to the god Hephæstus,¹ who, at his forge under Mount Etna, made armor for the gods. Hephæstus promised to make Achilles a suit of armor in one night. Next morning Thetis brought to Achilles the most beautiful suit of armor that was ever made. The sight of it gave him the first feeling of pleasure he had had since the death of Patroclus.

Putting on his new armor, Achilles strode into the camp of the Greeks and called a council of war.

THE VICTORY OF THE GREEKS.

Preparations were soon made. Achilles led forth the Greeks and rushed headlong upon the Trojans. So fierce was his rage that no Trojan could stand before him. The bravest of those who met him

¹ Hephæstus = hē-fēs'-tūs.

either turned and fled, or fell pierced by his spear. Even Hector, warned by the god Apollo, kept out of his way.

Among those who dwelt in Troy was Æneas,¹ son of the goddess Aphrodite. He was very brave, but being young and slender, he was no match for the raging giant, Achilles.

The Trojans, meanwhile, were flying pellmell to their own gates. It was feared that the Greeks would burst through these and take possession of Troy. Then the Prince Æneas was urged to go forth and give battle to Achilles.

Æneas knew that Achilles was stronger than he, yet he would not refuse to fight him, for though young, he was as brave as Achilles. He stepped forth, and facing the angry Greek, hurled a spear at his shield. The shield was made of five plates, two of brass, two of tin, and one of gold. The spear pierced two plates and stopped at the third.

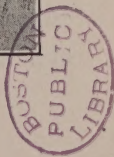
Achilles sent his own spear flying at Æneas. It passed clean through the brave Æneas's shield, but only touched his armor and made no wound. Ajax, the strong warrior, now rushed up behind Achilles, and lifted in his huge hand a stone which two common men could scarcely stir. He was about

¹ Æneas = ē-nē'-ās.



From the painting by Maignan.

THE PARTING OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.



to hurl it upon Æneas, when the sea-god Poseidon¹ took pity upon the boyish warrior.

He sent a cloud of mist between the fighting heroes, which hid them from each other's sight. Then he lifted Æneas and bore him over the heads of the army. The cloud cleared away, and Achilles knew that some god had saved Æneas's life.

Priam, standing on the wall of Troy, saw his whole army flying to reach its gates, while Achilles and the Greeks raged behind them. He gave orders that the gates be opened to the Trojans.

At last all the Trojans were within the gates but Hector, their bravest hero. That morning he had said good-by to his weeping wife and baby boy, and now, though feeling that he might die, he stood ready to do battle alone with the terrible Achilles. The king and queen from the wall begged him to come into the city, but he refused.

Achilles drew near, as awful to look upon as the god of war himself, his armor flashing in the sunlight. At that dread sight even Hector's courage failed, and he fled. Achilles pursued him, keeping between him and the walls, so that Hector might not escape. Three times they ran around the whole

¹ Poseidon = pōs-ī'dōn.

city, until Hector began to weary. But the god Apollo gave him strength, and would not let him fall.

Then came the goddess Athene. She was a friend to the Greeks, and had come to help Achilles ruin Hector. She took the form of one of Hector's brothers, and appeared by his side. Hector now felt that with this aid he might turn and fight Achilles. He stopped his flight and faced him. Achilles came upon him, shouting defiance.

Hector flung his spear, but it struck the wonderful shield of Achilles and bounded back. He turned to speak to his brother, but no brother was there. Then Hector knew that he had been deceived, and that his end had come. He drew his sword and rushed upon Achilles. Achilles, choosing with his eye a spot in Hector's neck which his armor did not quite cover, carefully aimed his spear and threw it. Hector fell, wounded to death.

Then Achilles tied Hector's body to his chariot and dragged it nine times about the walls of Troy, while King Priam, who saw the sight, wept and wrung his hands in grief.

The grief of King Priam touched the heart of Zeus, king of all the gods, as he looked down

from his high mountain, Olympus. He sent for Thetis, mother of Achilles, and bade her go to him and ask him to give the body of Hector to King Priam. Then he sent a messenger to King Priam with words of courage, telling him to go to Achilles and beg the body of his son.

Priam made ready to go. He took rich gifts in his chariot, with which to ransom the body of Hector.

Zeus sent his own messenger, Hermes, to guide Priam to the tent of Achilles. Hermes, taking the form of a young man, mounted King Priam's chariot and seized the reins. With his magic wand he put all the guards to sleep, and drove straight to the tent where Achilles was sitting with two of his warriors.

The aged king threw himself at the feet of Achilles, and said: "Think, O Achilles, of thine own father, full of days, like myself; perhaps even now some enemy is troubling him and there is none to help him, yet he knows that his son Achilles lives, and he still rejoices, hoping some day to see thy face again. But no comfort cheers me; my brave sons have been slain; yet one I had, braver than all the rest, whom, fighting for his country, thou hast killed. I am come to redeem his body, bring-

ing precious gifts as a ransom. Achilles, remember thy father, and for his sake show mercy to me!"

These words and the kneeling, white-haired old man moved the heart of Achilles to pity. He took the ransom from the chariot, and in it put Hector's body, covering it with a robe.

Then the people of Troy mourned Hector for ten days, and placing his body on a pile of wood, burned it and put the ashes in a golden urn.

Priam had a beautiful daughter, whom Achilles saw and loved. He wished very much to marry her, and talked to the Greeks of making peace with the Trojans and sparing the city. Achilles then went to the temple of Apollo to arrange for the marriage. He wore no armor, and in reverence to the god put off his shoes.

Surely, no Trojan would harm him who was thus preparing to forgive them and spare Troy. But the wicked Paris, the son of Priam, who had caused all the trouble, seeing Achilles thus defenseless, stole in behind him, and pulling his bow, shot an arrow at his heel, the only part of his body that could be wounded. Without a groan, the great hero fell dead.

THE WOODEN HORSE.

The murder of Achilles by the wicked Paris ended all thoughts of sparing the city. The Greeks now decided to take it by a trick which the wise Ulysses planned. Making no sign of anger at the death of their Achilles, they sent word that they were leaving Troy, but would make a final offering to the gods.

They built a very large wooden horse, as high as the walls of the city, and as big as a house. They knew that the Trojans would be afraid to keep out of the city an offering to the gods, and if they made this too big to pass through the gate, they would have to tear down a portion of the wall, and thus the Greeks could get in. They filled the horse with armed men. Then they left it at the gate of the city, and asked the Trojans to place it in the temple, lest the gods should be angry.

The Trojans all rushed out with joy, thinking that the Greeks had at last left them in safety. They gazed in wonder at the great wooden horse. As it was too big to go through their gates, they tore down a part of the wall, and dragged the horse through the streets to a place before the temple. Then they gave themselves up to

dancing and feasting, thinking that all danger was past.

The armed Greeks within the horse opened a secret door in its side, and while the Trojans slept they came out. The Greeks, who had returned to the gate in the darkness, now rushed in. That was the end of the city of Troy. The Greeks burned it to the ground. Then taking Helen, whose capture by Paris had caused all the trouble, they sailed back to Greece, mourning the death of Achilles and all their other fallen heroes.



THE WANDERINGS OF ÆNEAS.

THE FLIGHT FROM TROY.

TROY was burned and the good King Priam and his queen were both killed.

The Prince Æneas, sword in hand, fought the Greeks bravely, until he saw that all was lost.

He then hurried to his palace and called together his men. Hidden in a room of the palace he found his

wife, Creusa,¹ and his little son, Iulus,² with his old father, Anchises.³ He told them he had planned to flee from the land, and urged them to hasten with him to the seashore.

Anchises was too aged and feeble to walk so far, and asked Æneas to leave him there to die. Æneas would not thus desert his old father. Taking him upon his back, and leading little Iulus by the hand, he told his wife to follow him.

¹ Creusa = crē-ū'-sā. ² Iulus = ī-ū'-lūs. ³ Anchises = ān.kī'-sēz.



They hurried through the narrowest streets of Troy toward a gate which led to the sea. As they neared the gate Creusa was missed. Æneas rushed back into the city among its crowds of frightened people, calling wildly, "Creusa, Creusa!"

At last the spirit of Creusa appeared to him, and told him to search no longer, for she had been killed. He must fly at once, she said, to save their son Iulus, and establish for him a new home in a distant land upon the river Tiber.

Æneas sadly obeyed the spirit of his loved Creusa, and returned to his family at the gate. There he found a great number of his friends awaiting him. Together they went to the seashore, fitted up some ships, and set sail across unknown seas, to find a land where they might make their home.

THE HARPIES AND THE CYCLOPS.

After this band of Trojans had sailed for many days, a terrible storm overtook them. Suddenly the wind caught their sails and tossed their ships helplessly about; the lightning flashed, and darkness covered all the sea. They let down their sails, and taking the oars, rowed for the nearest land.

At length they reached the shores of an island. After three days and three nights of tossing upon

the sea, tired, wet, and hungry, they drew their little vessels upon the beach and hastened to prepare food. Seeing some cattle wandering near, they killed them and prepared a feast. Just as they were about to sit down to the tables they heard fearful cries, and a crowd of horrible creatures, such as they had never seen before, swooped down upon them and carried away all the food.

These creatures were called harpies, and the island was their home. They had the heads of women and the bodies of birds, and their hands had fierce, sharp claws. The followers of Æneas tried to shoot them with arrows, but their feathers were so hard and grew so close together that no weapon could pierce them.

The Trojans killed more cattle and prepared another meal, but again the harpies snatched up all their food. Made angry by the Trojan arrows, one harpy stood up and cursed them. She told them that awful troubles were in store for them; that before they reached their home in Italy, such hunger would attack them as would make them eat their very tables.

As soon as the storm died away the Trojans left the island.

After many days they spied another island, upon

the shore of which rose a noble city. With glad hearts they drew near this shore, and leaving their ships, went up to the city gates. They found the



"A MAN CAME RUSHING FROM THE WOODS."

prince of the city to be Helenus, a Trojan, who had married the widow of Hector of Troy. Here they were kindly received and feasted by Helenus.

When he heard of the curse of the harpies he

gave them a message from the god Apollo, saying that after all their troubles they should find a home in Italy. He said, "When you see, lying upon the shore, a great swine with many little pigs, you may know that this is your home; here you may build your city."

The Trojans at length reached the shores of the island of Sicily, near to the volcano, Mount Etna. Landing at twilight, they spent the night under the shadow of the mountain, which roared and rumbled and poured forth ashes and lava. All night long they heard these terrible noises and knew not whence they came.

Just as the morning star appeared, a man came rushing from the woods. He was thin and pale and covered with dirt, and his long beard fell to his knees. His ragged garments were pinned together with thorns. He was a Greek who had fought against Troy, but, though an enemy, he begged them to save a starving man.

He said that he had sailed with the hero Ulysses, who with his ship's company had landed at that place. While they slept at night in a cave, a fearful monster called Cyclops¹ had come upon them. He was as tall as a mountain, and had only one

¹ Cyclops = si'-klōps.

eye, in the middle of his forehead. He was fierce and cruel and liked to eat human beings. He had eaten several of Ulysses' men, and had it not been for a trick of Ulysses he would have eaten them all. Ulysses had put out his only eye with a firebrand, and then, as they all rushed madly for their ships, this man had been left behind.

While he was talking to them, the Trojans, looking up, saw the blind Cyclops coming toward them from the rocks. He had heard their voices on the shore, but, being blind, he could not see them. They, moving silently, entered their ships and rowed out to sea, taking with them the Greek.

Cyclops, carrying the trunk of a huge tree as a staff, came after them, and finding that he could not get to them, lifted up his voice in a mighty roar. At this his brothers, who were terrible giants, also rushed down and waded far out to sea to catch the fleeing ships. But they were too late; the Trojans were beyond their reach.

THE TROJANS REACH CARTHAGE.

Juno, wife of Jupiter,¹ the king of the gods, hated the beautiful goddess Venus.² Venus, who was the

¹ Jupiter = jū'-pi-ter, another name for Zeus.

² Another name for Aphrodite.

mother of Æneas, loved the Trojans, while the goddess Juno¹ was the friend of the Greeks.

Seeing Æneas's little band sailing in peace to the shores of Italy, Juno grew angry. She rushed to earth, and went to King Æolus,² who ruled the winds and kept them shut up in his cave. She ordered Æolus to let loose all the winds at once, that they might beat upon the ships of Æneas.

Then rushed forth the winds, the east wind, the south wind, and the west wind, arousing fierce storms. The little vessels of the Trojans, cutting long peaceful swells in a blue sea, were now met by monster waves and awful gales. Some were overturned, some scattered far and wide, and some driven upon the rocks.

Æneas and his brave band thought their end had come.

But Neptune,³ god of the sea, hearing this uproar of waves over his head, and knowing that he had not caused it, rose to the top of the waters and ordered the winds to leave his kingdom. Then he pushed off the ships from the rocks, and set them sailing over a calm sea.



¹ Another name for Hera.

² Æolus = ē'-ō-lūs.

³ Another name for Poseidon.

Storm-tossed and weary, the Trojans sailed for the nearest shore. They saw a harbor, protected by high cliffs, and at last, wearied and drenched, pulled their boats up on the beach. Æneas shot a deer, and they prepared a feast.

While the feast was preparing, Æneas and his faithful follower, Achates,¹ set out to see what manner of land they had come upon. They climbed a high hill, and saw in the distance a city. Then, leaving most of the band upon the shore with the ships, they set out toward it. As they neared the city, a young huntress stopped them, asking if they had seen her sister. They told her that they had not, and begged to know to what country and city they had come.

"The country is called Carthage," said the maiden; "the city yonder is that of Dido,² queen of the country. But who are you?"

"We are Trojans," sighed Æneas. "We came from ancient Troy, and my name is Æneas. I seek the land of Italy. With twenty ships I started. My mother, the goddess Venus, led the way. Seven ships are all that are left to me. The rest have been swallowed by the sea, and I remain wandering upon the earth, unknown, and without friends."

¹ Achates = ā-kā'-tēz.

² Dido = dī'-dō.



From the painting by Guérin.

ÆNEAS AND DIDO.

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The huntress replied: "Think not you are unloved of heaven. I am sure that all your ships will come back to you. Follow this road wherever it may lead."

She turned to leave them, and, as she glided gracefully away, Æneas saw a rosy glow about her and smelled a lovely odor. He saw her neck with its soft curls, and knew the huntress as his mother, the goddess Venus.

THE QUEEN OF CARTHAGE.

Venus had wrapped them in a cloud. As they walked through the city no one saw them. They came at last to the palace of Dido, and, entering, wandered through its halls. Suddenly they saw right before them all their friends from the lost ships, whom they had supposed to be dead. Then the cloud about them lifted, and they embraced one another.

The lovely queen, Dido, came to Æneas, and made him welcome to her city. He went back to the shore for his people and the little Iulus, and that night Dido spread a great feast for them.

Æneas learned to love Queen Dido, and she loved him. She wished him to marry her and live in Carthage always. But Jupiter, seeing that

Æneas was willing to do this, sent to him his messenger, the god Mercury,¹ to warn him.

Mercury bound upon his feet his sandals with golden wings, grasped in his hand his wand, and flew to earth. Arriving in Carthage, he found Æneas, dressed in soft robes, busily planning buildings for the city.

The god spoke to him sternly: "Do you stay here content to build palaces for Dido? Have you forgotten your own glory? If you care not for yourself, think of Iulus! To him the gods have promised Italy."

Æneas heard him sadly. He knew that he must leave Dido, who had been so kind to him, and whom he loved tenderly. But he bowed his head at the words of Mercury, and the god disappeared into the sky.

Without saying a word to the queen, Æneas made ready his ships. But Dido found out what he was doing, and, with tears and sobs, begged him to remain. Fearing the gods, Æneas dared not. So, at length, the little Trojan band set sail, with their prows pointed northward to Italy.

When the ships went down the harbor the heart of Queen Dido was broken. She built a great

¹ Another name for Hermes.

funeral pile, and, lighting it herself, lay quietly down upon it and died.

Æneas at last came to the shore where lay the swine with many little pigs. There the ships reached a haven. Æneas and his brave comrades made their home, and built a city, which was the beginning of the great Roman Empire.



BEOWULF.¹

THE NORSEMEN.



LONG, long ago, on the shores of the northern ocean, lived a wild and savage people. They were tall and large, with fair skins, and long, yellow hair hanging down upon their shoulders. Their eyes were clear, blue, and fierce. They loved two things better than all else; these were fighting and sailing on the seas.

The lands of the Norsemen were low and marshy, and were often overflowed by the waves of the ocean. In summer the marshy land was green and beautiful, but all through the long winter everything was frozen. Icy blasts swept over the sea, chilling people to the bone.

The fiercest enemy that these bold warriors had to meet was the bitter cold, yet they fought it

¹ Beowulf = Bā'-ô-wôlf.

bravely. The most joyous time was the spring, when the sun came back and melted the snow and the ice. Then their hearts were warmed also, and they pushed off from the shore in their sturdy boats. Through the summer they sailed over the seas, braving the storms, laughing at the winds, glad that the sun shone and that the waters were free from ice.

All Norsemen obeyed a king chosen from among their princes. He took care of them and gave them lands. He clothed them in suits of armor, and placed upon their fingers golden rings to show the bond between them, and for this he was called the Ring Giver. They in turn agreed always to protect the king, to follow him in war and peace, and to die themselves rather than let harm come to their beloved ruler.

The knights and princes lived with the king in his royal castle. From this they went out to fight their enemies; and if there were no wars, they played at fighting with one another. At the day's close all would gather in the great dining hall of the royal castle. This was called the "Mead Hall," because there the warriors drank mead, which was their favorite drink. They sat on benches around great tables and ate dinners of the flesh of boars

and cattle, and drank a great deal of mead, while the singers with their harps sang to them long stories of war, of brave knights fighting for their king or for love of combat.

Noble ladies, and oftentimes the queen herself, moved among the men, pouring mead for them. If there had been a battle, or any of the knights had shown great courage, the king or the queen

gave to them gifts of swords or armor or horses, and so the king was also called the Gift Giver.



HROTHGAR,¹ KING OF THE DANES.

In the land of the Danes Hrothgar was the great king; he had many princes for his vassals or followers, who gathered in his mead hall at night. There were so many that the hall was too small for them. Then Hrothgar decided to build a new mead hall which should be the largest on the earth, where he and his vassals might find room for their gatherings. The hall rose to a great

¹ Hrothgar = hrōt'-gār.

height, sparkling with a thousand lofty turrets ; it was the greatest hall ever built, and men came from far and near to see its glory. In the vast feasting room were many beautiful things, horns of deer, tusks of boars, and shields and bows of silver and gold.

Hrothgar named the hall Heort.¹ There at night used to gather, in delight and pride, the king and his princes ; the sound of their joyous shouting filled the hall, until the music of harp strings and the voice of the minstrel called them to quiet. Then they would listen to some tale they loved.

King Hrothgar and his vassals lived happily in Heort for years until a dreadful thing happened. Grendel,² a frightful giant, with wickedness and hatred in his heart, came up out of the marshes and crept softly to the great mead hall, where the knights had fallen asleep after their feasting. He seized thirty of them and dragged them to his home in the marshes, to make a banquet for himself. Night after night this monster would creep to the mead hall and seize some unhappy prince. No weapon could wound him, therefore it did no good to fight against him.

The king and all his vassals had to leave beauti-

¹ Heort = hā'-ört.

² Grendel = grēn'-děl.

ful Heort. Many and many a noble prince was dragged away to satisfy the hunger of the giant Grendel. At length all were in despair, for they could not guard against this terrible monster, which every night came up out of the marshes to do mischief. Twelve long, sad years passed, and still no one lived in Heort, and sorrow ruled the land.

Distant a day's journey over the sea was the land of the Saxons. Here Hygelac¹ ruled, and in his hall were brave young princes with many followers, the bravest of whom was Beowulf. Beowulf was the strongest of men, and the most dreaded in war by his enemies. His grip none could resist. Not only was he mighty on land, but he was a powerful swimmer. For days, clad in his suit of metal armor, he could swim over the ocean and fight the monsters of the deep. He longed for war and conquest, but Hygelac's country was at peace, so Beowulf looked elsewhere in search of a foe.

One night to Hygelac's doors came a little minstrel boy, who, in Heort's hall, had heard of the work of Grendel. Fleeing in fear he had wandered from land to land. Beowulf listened to his tale, and then begged Hygelac to give him a ship.

¹ Hygelac = hi-jē'-lāc.

that he might go over the "Swan Road" to the land of his kinsman, Hrothgar, and give aid to the sorrowing king. Hygelac gave consent, and commanded a ship to be prepared. Beowulf chose fourteen companions, the bravest that he could find, to go with him on his dangerous journey to fight the monster, Grendel.

In time the ship, strong and seaworthy, was ready to cut through the waves. Quickly Beowulf and his brave companions, bidding farewell to their native land, boarded the vessel, hoisted the sail, and started over the "Whale Road" for the land of Hrothgar. After sailing a day they saw the shining sea cliffs and the mountains of the land of the Danes. "Then was Beowulf at the end of his journey," and they all thanked God that they had found the sea paths so easy.

THE COMING OF THE SAXONS.

Far up on the cliffs above them stood the sea guard of the Danes. It was his duty to ride back and forth upon his steed, watching the ocean to see if any enemy was approaching. When he saw Beowulf on his ship, with his brave comrades, he shook his spear in his hand and boldly called out: "What armor-clad men are ye, coming

over the sea path? I am the coast guard; never saw I a greater earl than the one who leads; tell me quickly who ye are."

Beowulf called aloud from the deck of his vessel, "We are Saxons, and companions of Hygelac; our people are friends of your people; we have heard that a secret foe, in the dark night, shows his hatred to the Danes by dreadful deeds, and we have come to give friendly advice and our aid that the foe may be overcome."

Then answered the guard: "Truly ye are no enemies of the Danes; pass on with your weapons and your armor. I myself will lead you to the king, and I will command my men to keep your vessel from harm."

So they went up the cliffs, leaving the broad ship at anchor in the bay, with the golden boar's head on the prow shining in the sun. The guard led them until they were in sight of the walls of the castle. Then he went back to his place upon the cliffs, while the heroes strode on to the door of the royal hall. Soon were they in the presence of the king, as he sat upon his throne.

Beowulf said to Hrothgar: "I am Hygelac's kinsman and vassal; in my youth I have met many dangers; I have heard of Grendel, and that your

mead hall stands empty at night because of him, so my brave companions and I have come with this one request, that we alone may be permitted to rid Heort of this monster."

Joy filled the bosom of Hrothgar at these words, and when night came he gave a great feast in honor of his noble visitors. Songs were sung, and the minstrels told tales of brave deeds, while the queen came in her royal robes and offered the mead cup to the heroes. When it began to grow late, all the Danes withdrew from the hall, leaving Beowulf and his brave companions to wait for the dreaded Grendel.

As the king left the hall, he said to Beowulf, "Never before since I could lift my hand and my shield have I trusted the royal hall of the Danes to any one. Be mindful of glory, watch against the foe, and no wish shalt thou want if thou comest free with thy life."

After the king and his followers had gone, Beowulf said to his band, "I know that Grendel may not be fought with weapons, but I believe that I am as strong as he, and I will fight him with my hands alone."

Then they lay down on the mead tables in their armor, and soon all but the ever watchful Beowulf

were asleep. He lay down on a mead table also, and pretended to be asleep, while he waited for the giant.

Soon from the misty marshes came Grendel creeping, his mind full of wicked thoughts, expecting to catch some of the warriors. At the touch of his powerful hand the door flew open, and in he burst with a light like fire shining from his eyes. He saw the band of warriors sleeping peacefully in the hall, and seized one. Not satisfied with one, he started toward Beowulf.

THE BATTLE.

The warrior was watching for him, and quickly reaching out his hand, seized the claw of the monster, and sat upon his arm. Grendel knew that he had met his match. Never before had he felt such a grip. For the first time in his long, wicked life he felt fear. He tried to draw away his claw and shake off Beowulf and escape from the hall, but Beowulf held him fast.

Then began as fierce a battle as two beings ever fought without weapons. They broke down the mead tables and benches in their mighty struggle. The warriors rose and looked on breathlessly, but could give no aid to their leader.

Beowulf's grip grew tighter, and Grendel's became weaker, until at last, with a terrible pull, the monster tore off his claw, and leaving it in Beowulf's hand, rushed out to the marshes to die.

Then there was great joy among the Danes, and in the morning all gathered in the hall to do honor to the hero. They could scarcely believe that the dreaded foe was killed, but there as proof was his great claw, which Beowulf had hung from the ceiling. Then they praised Beowulf to the skies, and Hrothgar with his queen came also to do him honor.

The king, standing by the great column in the middle of the hall, and looking at the high roof adorned with gold, and at Grendel's claw hanging there, said: "For this glad sight, be thanks to the Almighty quickly given. Much evil have I suffered from Grendel; but God, the King of glory, ever works wonder on wonder. Now will I have thee, Beowulf, noblest of men, as my son. May the Almighty repay thee."

Beowulf replied, "Gladly did I fight this battle, that I might put the dreaded Grendel out of the world."

That night a great feast was given in the banquet hall. The minstrels sang their songs, and the queen passed around the mead cup, bidding the warriors

drink, and saying to each, "Receive thou this cup, my dearest lord, giver of treasure; be thou in health."



THE QUEEN AND BEOWULF.

She went about the hall until she came to Beowulf, around whose neck she placed a great golden collar set with gems. Then she said to him, "Enjoy thou this collar, in safety, Beowulf, and be thou

gainer in all things; and forever and forever shall men of the earth honor thee, as widely as the ocean sweeps upon the blustering bluffs. Be, as long as thou livest, a rich and blessed prince." Then she went to her royal seat.

The king too gave him many gifts, a golden cup and a suit of armor, together with rings and jewels. He also gave him eight steeds with gold bridles, and on each of them was a saddle set with jewels.

At length the feast was over. The warriors, as they used to do before they were frightened away by Grendel, wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay down to sleep on the mead benches, thinking that all danger was past.

But they had forgotten the mother of Grendel. She was a dreadful creature who had done as much mischief in the world as Grendel himself. When she saw her son coming home to die, having left his claw in Heort, she was filled with rage, and made up her mind to go to the hall and avenge his death. She came to the palace and entered the door before the warriors could rouse themselves to defense. She seized one of them, a dear friend of Hrothgar, and rushed away with him to the marshes. Beowulf was

not in the hall; he had gone to rest in another apartment.

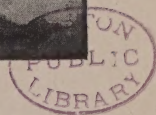
Again was there great grief and rage among the Danes. Hrothgar was in despair, and joy at the death of Grendel was turned to sorrow. The trouble was laid before Beowulf. The king told him that there was a dreadful marsh down below the castle, near the sea, so deep that no one had ever found the bottom of it. The wind always blew fiercely over its surface, and in its depths were frightful monsters which rose to the top and sank again. Men kept away from it through fear. At the bottom of this marsh, down underneath the flowing waters, where no man had ever been, dwelt the dragon, Grendel's mother. "Seek her there if thou darest," said the king; "and if thou succeedest, I will pay thee money from my treasures, and also jewels."

BEOWULF'S SECOND BATTLE.

Beowulf, standing straight, strong, and brave, said fearlessly: "Grieve not, O wise one, it is better to avenge the death of a friend than to mourn for him; the wise seek glory even in death. Let us hasten to follow in the footprints of Grendel's



"BEOWULF LEAPED INTO THE POOL."



mother. Be thou but patient, and I hope all will be well."

Up sprang Hrothgar, filled with thankfulness. Horses were brought, and they followed the track of the dragon, down to the edge of the marsh. Then they put upon Beowulf a suit of wonderful armor, and a coat of mail so strong that no weapon could pierce it, and a helmet that flashed light, through which no sword could go. He took also his own great sword, the most priceless of all his treasures.

Beowulf, standing on the edge of the marsh, before he went beneath the waters, turned to Hrothgar and bade him, in case the dragon should conquer, to care for all the brave knights who had come with him across the seas, and see that they were safely returned to their homes. He also made Hrothgar promise that he would send to Hygelac the jewels which he had just earned. Then Beowulf leaped into the pool.

Down, down, down, he went all day long, until at last he saw the bottom. The dragon who lived there, gloating over her revenge, soon felt that the waters were moving. She caught sight of Beowulf, and rushed forth to seize him in her claws. His armor was too strong, however, and she could

not hurt him. But she clung to him, and dragged him down to her own home underneath the sea.

Beowulf struck at her with his sword, so that the blade rang with the blow. Many a foe in the past had been struck down by this great sword, but this time it failed. Beowulf threw away the sword, and seizing the monster by the shoulder, threw her to the floor. She caught him with her claws and held him fast, and he, weary with his long journey through the water, and weak from the battle, stumbled and fell. The dragon drew her short sword to kill him. She struck him with all her force upon his shoulder, but the armor in which he was clad saved him again, else he would have perished.

He leaped up and looked about him for a weapon. Among the many suits of armor there, he saw an old strong sword. It was the best of all weapons, but so very large that no one else was able to lift it. He seized this sword and struck at the dragon with all his force, so that he cut her head from her body.

As he looked through the hall, he saw lying there the bodies of the two dreadful dragons, Grendel, whom he had first killed, and his mother. But to make sure that Grendel was really dead, he lifted

the huge sword and smote off his head. Instead of blood, this monster's veins were filled with poison so deadly that even the blade of the wonderful sword was at once burned up.

Then holding the hilt in his hand, his victory gained, Beowulf was ready to begin his journey upward through the sea.

Many of the gray-haired elders of the Danes, and Beowulf's trusty companions, sat through long hours upon the banks of the marsh, waiting, and waiting, and waiting. Their courage and their hope slowly left them, for they looked upon the rough waters, and Beowulf did not appear. Sick at heart, they thought that the monster had destroyed him. At length, their hope gone, the Danes walked sadly back to the palace, but Beowulf's faithful vassals, unable to give up all hope, sat and watched the pool.

Suddenly Beowulf appeared above the waves. He was swimming strongly, bearing in his hands the head of Grendel, and the hilt of the great sword. They ran to meet him, and drew him to land. Then they took off his heavy armor, and carrying the head of Grendel, led Beowulf to the great hall, beautiful Heort.

The king and his nobles could scarcely believe

their eyes, so great was their joy. But Beowulf showed them the head of Grendel and the hilt of the famous sword, and told them the story of his battle and his victory.

Then, while they all kept silent, the king, the great gift-giver, spoke thus, "Thy fame is wide-spread, Beowulf, my friend. As I promised before, I give thee my friendship; thou shalt be a comfort to thine own people, a help to all heroes. Be not proud, mighty warrior, for strength is not for all time. Go now to thy seat, partake of the joy of the feast, and when morning shall come, we will have many treasures in common."

Soon night lowered dark over Heort. The aged king, the brave warriors, Beowulf, and all his band retired to rest. No fear had they of Grendel or his mother. All slept soundly until the sun brought in the morning.

THE RETURN OF THE SAXONS.

When they were all come together again, Beowulf said to the king: "We sea-goers who have come from afar now wish to return to Hygelac. We have done what we came to do; thou hast used us well. If, in any way, at any time, I can gain

more of thy heart's love for myself, I shall be glad."

Hrothgar replied, "Thy bold courage pleases me so well, Beowulf dear, that peace shall ever rule between thy people and my people. So long as I rule this wide realm, we shall have treasures in common."

The king gave him more gifts for himself and his companions, and bade him return to his own people. Then the gray-haired king fell upon Beowulf's neck, while the tears flowed from his eyes, for he scarcely hoped that they might meet again. Beowulf marched with his treasures, led by all the people, down to the seashore, where his battle boat rode at anchor.

The horses and jewels, gifts of Hrothgar, were quickly put on board. The vessel groaned beneath the weight, but with favoring winds it sped over the waves until the cliffs of the home land appeared to the glad eyes of the Saxons. Greatly did the people and the King Hygelac admire the gifts of Hrothgar, and greatly did they praise the heroes for their wonderful deeds.

Beowulf lived for many years among his people, honored by all, until at length the King Hygelac died. Then all the princes proclaimed Beowulf

king, and he ruled in might and peace and glory for half a hundred years. For fifty winters Beowulf ruled his people as their king. He was now an old man, and no longer cared to breast the seas or fight his foes. But he still was strong, and could use the might of his youth when there was need.

In his old age a terrible thing happened to his people. There was in a cave in the mountain near Beowulf's palace a great hoard of treasures of gold and silver. It had been hidden there long ago by the king of a people since passed away. Over this hoard a dragon kept guard, a fierce and horrible creature, who breathed flames of poison from his nostrils and his mouth. One of Beowulf's people, finding this hoard of treasures while the dragon was asleep, bore away a jeweled cup and many gold rings.

When the dragon awoke and missed his treasures, he was filled with rage, and when evening came he went out breathing flames everywhere, and burned the dwellings of the people, and their palaces and their temples. The land was filled with fire, and all the people were in terror.

Then Beowulf resolved to go and fight for his people once more, though he knew not whether his strength would last. But he put on a suit of

armor, and took an iron shield to protect him against the dragon's fiery breath. He went out boldly, and led with him a band of warriors; but he said to them, "Wait ye on the mountain, clad in your armor, for this battle is not your work, nor is it for any one but for me."

THE LAST BATTLE.

Then Beowulf went to meet the dragon, and called aloud to him. The dragon knew the king's voice, and from the cavern came a blast of the monster's fiery breath. The earth resounded, and Beowulf raised his shield, swung his sword over his head, and waited. Soon the dragon came crawling over the earth, his eyes gleaming, and with flames bursting from his nostrils he hastened to destroy his foe. But the mighty king lifted his old sword against him and struck him a fearful blow. It wounded, but did not kill him.

Then the dragon rushed upon him more fiercely than ever. The men who were watching the battle were terribly frightened, and, like cowards, all but one fled. This one, Wiglaf by name, a noble prince, seeing his lord suffering from the heat and the attack of the dragon, rushed to his aid. The battle

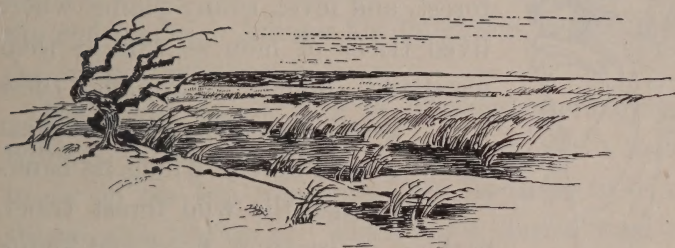
did not last long. The king was burned by the poisonous flames, but he struck one more fierce blow and cut the dragon's body in two. The enemy of the people fell dead, but it was the aged king's last blow. So injured was he by the dragon's breath that he knew his end was near. He had won his last victory, and with the help of the faithful prince he seated himself by a rock and patiently waited for death.

He spoke to his companion thus: "I have ruled this people fifty winters; during all these years not an enemy has dared to attack us; I have not sought battle, nor have I broken my promises. Now bring out the treasure from the cave, that I may see it, since for it I have given up my life and my people."

Wiglaf, filled with grief, obeyed the words of his wounded lord, and hastily brought from the cave the treasures hidden there — gold, silver, and jewels, cups and bracelets, and a wonderful banner.

The king, seeing this hoard, said, "For these treasures I give to the Lord, the glorious King, thanks, that my people before my death may have them." Then he took from his neck the gold collar which Hrothgar's queen had bestowed upon

him, and placed it about the neck of his brave companion, saying, "All my own family have passed away, now I shall go after them." This was the last word of the aged Beowulf, and soon his soul left his breast to seek the reward of the good.



THE NIBELUNG'S¹ RING AND SIEGFRIED.²

GERMANY.



CENTURIES ago the land of Germany was all wild, green forest, and level, sunny plains, where lived tribes of men as wild as their woodland home. Through these green forests flowed the great river Rhine. Along its banks roamed the wild forest tribes, bathing in its swift flood and loving its rushing waters.

These forest men had strange beliefs. They peopled their gloomy forests with giants and dragons. They imagined an underworld where lived a little people called dwarfs.

Beyond the mountain tops they pictured a country called Asgard,³ where, among the clouds, lived many gods and goddesses. These, they believed, came

¹ Nibelung = nē-be-lūng'. ² Siegfried = sēeg'-frēed.

³ Asgard = ǣs'-gǣrd.

often to Midgard,¹ which was their name for the earth. The gods and goddesses roamed at will through the great Midgard forests, helping or hindering the affairs of men, as they wished.

The greatest of all the gods was Wotan,² called the All-Father. In the center of Asgard arose his great palace, Valhalla.³ Wotan's wife was the goddess Fricka.⁴ He had many sons and daughters. One of his sons, Thor,⁵ was the god of thunder. Baldur⁶ was god of the sun. Loki,⁷ maker of mischief, was the god of fire. Among his daughters, Brunhilde,⁸ the valkyr,⁹ was best beloved.

The rough forest men of Midgard were great fighters. Their chief glory was war. For a man to die in his bed was considered by them to be a shame and weakness. Their chief desire was to die fighting as heroes upon the field of battle. The All-Father, Wotan, sent his daughters, the valkyrs, riding upon swift white horses, down to these battlefields of heroes. There they lifted the dying warriors upon their saddles and carried them in glory to Valhalla.

¹ Midgard = mīd'-gård.

⁵ Thor = tôr.

² Wotan = wō'-tân.

⁶ Baldur = bäl'-dūr.

³ Valhalla = vāl-häl'-là.

⁷ Loki = lō'-kī.

⁴ Fricka = frīck'-â.

⁸ Brunhilde = brūn-hīl'-dē.

⁹ valkyr = vāl'-kēr.

Once Wotan himself, taking the form of a wild, skin-clad forest dweller, came to Midgard and there married a mortal woman. To them were born twins, Sigmund¹ and his sister Sieglinde.² The heroic deeds of Sieglinde's son, Siegfried, have come down to us in a tale called "The Ring of the Nibelung."

The dwarfs, dwelling in the underworld beneath Midgard, were known as the tribes of the Nibelung. They were workers in iron, silver, and gold. All the precious metals in Asgard were wrought by their hands. Had it not been for their theft of the gold in the river Rhine, the great Nibelung story would never have been told.

RHINEGOLD.

For unknown centuries the river Rhine has swept down to the sea, winding its way between green forests. Long, long ago there lived, hidden deep beneath its rolling flood, the god of the river, Father Rhine. Under its bed lay the dark, gloomy caves of the Nibelung dwarfs, who now and then crept up into the river and swam about in its depths.



¹ Sigmund = sēeg'-mūnd.

² Sieglinde = Sēeg-līn'-dē.

In the deepest part of the river bed arose a great hill. It was a beautiful hill, glimmering with pink and white pebbles and fairy-like green waterweeds, and on its very top lay a large, dull-looking rock. Ugly and dark as this rock appeared, it was yet the great treasure of Father Rhine, and it was called Rhinegold.

Father Rhine set three of his fairest daughters to guard his treasure always. These Rhine maidens were Flosshilde,¹ Woglinde,² and Wellgunde.³ Beautiful maidens they were, with long, soft, floating locks of hair, which streamed out upon the water as they swam in and out about the rocks, waving their lovely arms.

Every once in a while the dull rock would burst into a glow of golden light, which lit up like sunshine the dark river water, and then the Rhine daughters would sing a song of praise to the gold, their voices dying away in a long, sweet cry : —

“Rhinegold, Rhinegold !
Loveliest gold, glorious gold !”

Rhinegold was the joy of the river.

The Nibelung dwarfs were very greedy for gold

¹ Flosshilde = flōss-hīl'-dē.

² Woglinde = wōg-līn'-dē.

³ Wellgunde = wēll-gūn'-dē.

and silver, and as Father Rhine was fearful lest they should steal his treasure, he warned his daughters to guard the Rhinegold carefully from the Nibelung.

In one of the deepest and gloomiest of the dwarfs' caves dwelt Alberich.¹ In its midst glowed a fire, before which stood an anvil. There the hammer of Alberich, or his foster brother, Mime,² rang busily all day and all night. In the corners of the cave were piles of gold and silver, twinkling and gleaming as the firelight flashed over them.

One day Alberich, flinging the hammer to Mime, left the cave, and creeping in the darkness up a long, winding way, found himself plunged suddenly into the cool green water at the bottom of river Rhine. Swimming along in its depths, he came upon the Rhine hill, with its three floating maidens.

Alberich called to the maidens to come and be friends with him. But they swam out of his reach, far above his head, mocking his ugly black form and face. The dwarf, shaking his fist at them, stood at the foot of the Rhine hill, looking upward, when all at once Rhinegold flashed into its beautiful glow of light. It flooded the dark waters with

¹ Alberich = äl'-bêr-ich.

² Mime = mîm'-ê.

glorious radiance, and quite dazzled Alberich. The maidens burst into their song of praise:—

“Rhinegold! Rhinegold!
Loveliest gold, glorious gold!
Who from the gold,
Can fashion a ring,
Conquers and rules o'er the world!”

At first Alberich, blinded by the light, paid no heed to the words of the song, but when it was sung a second time he caught its meaning. Springing up the Rhine hill he snatched the lump with greedy, grasping hands and rushed headlong down the river.

The moment the gold touched the dwarf's hand its light went out. The river became dark and cold, as Alberich, hugging the gold, reached the entrance of the caves and disappeared. The river was now left desolate, and the Rhine maidens, crying and weeping, swam about the Rhine hill mourning the theft.

At length they cried aloud to the god Loki. Loki, hearing their cry, came quickly to them and stood upon the bank of the river. He wore flame-colored scarlet from head to toe, while a crown of tongues of living fire played about the fire-god's head. When he heard of the gold's power and

Alberich's theft, he promised the maidens to try and get the treasure for them again. Then, as he went leaping and dancing through the wood, he planned in his evil mind how to get Rhinegold into his own hands.

Alberich, carrying the gold, returned to the cave and found the little dwarf Mime still busy at the anvil. Mime was a cunning smith and a skillful maker of ornaments. Flinging the lump of gold upon the floor, Alberich bade him shape a ring from it. Mime hastened to obey, and wicked Alberich sat down among the dark shadows to wait.

At last Mime handed him the ring, glistening strangely. Alberich put it on, and striding forth, went to all the caves of the Nibelung dwarfs. He ordered that the heaps of gold and silver which they had patiently dug for themselves from the earth, be carried to his own cave. Under the magic influence of the ring, not a dwarf dared disobey this command, but groaning and toiling, each began to carry his treasure to Alberich's cave. Alberich, in a fury of greed, snatched up a long whip, and rushed up and down the halls which led from cave to cave, cutting and lashing those who did not go fast enough.

In his fear lest some dwarf should see the ring

upon his finger, and guess its power, Alberich came to Mime again. He found him in the cave struggling to pile all the gold and silver about the walls. He ordered him to make a helmet, or a tight-fitting cap, from the Rhinegold. Mime, trembling with fear of Alberich, began this task, and Alberich went in and out of the cave, cracking the whip over his slave train as Mime worked. While Alberich was out of sight, Mime finished the tarn helm, as the gold helmet was called. Knowing it had magic power, he was just about to put it upon his head, when Alberich came in. He snatched it from Mime with a howl of rage. Placing it upon his own head, he instantly disappeared from sight, and Mime could see nothing. He could not even see the long black whip with which Alberich lashed him so pitilessly that he fell, cut and bleeding, upon the ground.

THE GODS AND THE GIANTS.

Meanwhile Loki, dancing and singing, came out of the forest to an open place, where in the golden rays of the early sun a palace of pearl met his eye. It shone gloriously. Its towers rose so high that their summits were lost in the rosy clouds of the sky.

Gazing up at its beauty stood Wotan and his

wife, Fricka. Near them was the goddess Freia,¹ giver of eternal youth, without whom the gods would grow old.

Loki knew all about this palace of pearl. It was he who induced the goddess Fricka to go to Wotan and ask that it might be built. Two great giants, Fafnir² and Fasolt,³ were the builders. Wotan did not want the palace, for the giants had asked a fearful price; they had demanded the sun and moon and Freia. Again wily Loki had persuaded Fricka, saying that when the palace was built there would be some way of escaping the payment of the debt.

Now, as Loki on the forest's edge stood gazing up at the palace, he heard a wild cry. Out of the forest rushed the giants Fafnir and Fasolt, straight toward Freia. The poor maiden in terror threw her arms about Fricka. But the giants, roaring that she was their own, since the palace now stood finished, snatched her from Fricka and held her between them.

Loki rushed up to them, but found himself unable to reach Freia. The giants with frowning looks held her firmly. Fricka, wringing her hands, turned to Loki, begging him to remember his

¹ Freia = frā'-ä.

² Fafnir = fäf'-nir.

³ Fasolt = fä'-sölt.

promise and find some way of paying the debt without losing Freia.

Thereupon Loki told Fafnir and Fasolt of the Rhinegold and its power, and said that, if they would restore Freia to the gods, he would deliver to them this stolen Rhine treasure, together with the hoard of silver and gold lying in Alberich's cave. The giants talked it over and at length accepted the offer. They said they would keep Freia until evening. Then a heap of gold as high as Freia, and solid enough to hide her completely from view, must be ready for them, there upon the grass. Picking up Freia, they strode away.

Wotan and Loki and Fricka looked at each other. Gods though they were, they were rapidly growing old. Wotan, with fear, saw Fricka's face becoming wrinkled and thin, and trembling, he bade Loki lead him to Alberich's cave.

Alberich, after lashing Mime, ran to chase a slave carrying gold, and when he returned, there, beside the fire of the forge, stood Wotan and Loki. As Loki watched Alberich, the flames of fire crept from their hearth and stretched forth to lick the fire-god's fingers.

Alberich had removed the helmet from his head and hung it to his belt. He now could be plainly

seen, and striding up to Wotan and Loki, he asked them why they were there.

Wotan answered mildly that they had heard of his great power and had come to learn if the tale were true. The little black dwarf then began to boast, and tell them of all the wonderful things which he could do. Loki asked him in a mocking tone if he were merely talking, or if he could show them some of these wonders.

Alberich instantly changed himself into a huge dragon, and then into a toad. As soon as he was changed to a toad, Loki caught him up and stripped the ring and the tarn helm from him. Alberich, in his own form, fell yelling to the earth, and Wotan held the magic treasures.

Alberich shrieked with rage at the loss of the ring.

He saw the slaves, at Wotan's bidding, preparing to carry the hoard up to the earth. And, when at last Wotan, with the ring upon his hand, started to leave the cave, Alberich stood up, and there put a terrible curse upon the ring.

"Death and sorrow shall come to any one who owns it!" he cried; but the gods, scarcely listening, hurried away.

The great hoard of Alberich now lay upon the

green grass, where also sat Wotan and Fricka and Loki, as the sun went down. With them were Fricka's two brothers, the gods Donner¹ and Fro.² All the gods looked very much older and had lost their glowing color; even the flames of Loki's crown burned dim. Suddenly Fafnir and Fasolt appeared, leading Freia; but when Fricka would have run to embrace her, Fasolt held her back. Not until the gold belonged to the giants might the gods touch Freia again.

Fasolt and Fafnir set their great staffs into the ground, side by side, with a space between, and in this space they placed Freia. Loki and Fro at once began to pile up the treasure around her, so that little by little she was hidden from sight, all except one chink.

The gods then looked the pile over and found the one chink not covered, where they could yet see Freia's golden hair. Wotan still had upon his finger the magic ring, which he had made up his mind to try to keep. The giants saw the chink and roared out that it must be covered with gold. Then Wotan slowly stepped forward, and drawing the ring from his finger, put it into the empty space. Now Freia was entirely covered.

¹ Donner = dōnⁿ-nēr.

² Fro = frō.

The two giants, thrusting greedy fingers into the pile of gold, set Freia free. She ran to Fricka, who, embracing her, at once grew young again.

Fafnir and Fasolt brought out two great bags and began to quarrel about the ownership of different pieces of gold. Loki slipped slyly up to Fafnir, and, knowing the curse upon the ring, told him to take that and pay no heed to the rest. Fasolt had just selected the ring himself, and would not give it up to Fafnir. Fafnir snatched the ring from Fasolt, and in the struggle which followed, killed him. Then, taking all the gold, he hurried away, deep into the heart of the forest, where he dug a great hole, called the Neidhole,¹ and buried within it the gold, the tarn helm, and the ring. He changed himself into a great dragon, breathing fire and death, and coiling himself beside the Neidhole guarded his treasure.

Meanwhile, in river Rhine, the Rhine daughters floated up and down, crying pitifully :—

“Rhinegold! Purest gold!
O would that thy light!
Waved in the waters below!”

But the gold returned to them no more.

¹ Neidhole = nīd'-hōle.

Wotan, having had the ring in his possession, was touched with the curse of it. He wanted it again. Seeing it hidden beneath the serpent coils of Fafnir, he dreamed of a hero, strong enough to fight the dragon and regain the gold.

SIEGFRIED.

Wotan fashioned a magic sword which he called Nothung. It came into the possession of a hero who carried it into a battle where Wotan, descending suddenly between the warriors, struck Nothung with his spear and shattered it to pieces. The sword was carried to the hut of Mime, which lay deep in the green forest, by Sieglinde, who was the wife of the slain hero.

Her little lad, Siegfried, was born later in Mime's hut, and his poor mother dying, the sly dwarf brought up the boy to call him father. Of the great sword, Nothung, and his own warrior father, Siegfried knew nothing.

Blue-eyed and golden-haired, he grew up in the wide, open forest, alone with Mime. The lad soon showed so great a strength and such a wonderful lack of fear, that a plan began to shape itself in Mime's wily mind. He wanted some one who knew not fear to go to the Neidhole and kill Fafnir, the

dragon. Then he, Mime, would seize the tarn helm and the ring, and with them in his possession he would have the power which Alberich had held.



MIME AND SIEGFRIED.

Siegfried was so strong that every sword which Mime forged for him broke in pieces after the lad had carried it a day or two. At length, on a summer morning, grumbling and growling at Siegfried's strength, Mime finished forging a very powerful sword. At that moment Siegfried himself, blowing

his horn and singing his merry hunting song, dashed into the cave leading a brown bear. The lad and the beast chased each other about the cave, and Mime, shivering with fear, ran for safety to a dark corner. At last Siegfried drove the bear from the cave, and laughing heartily at Mime's fright, threw himself down before the fire.

Mime, half afraid of Siegfried's strength, yet wishing to use it for his own ends, crept to the anvil, and grasping the sword he had just completed, gave it to Siegfried. The boy sprang up, swung the sword three times about his head, and dashed it upon the anvil, where it broke, splintered into a thousand pieces.

"Pah!" cried Siegfried, "canst thou not weld a sword of strength? Mime, thou art not my father! Tell me, who is the father of Siegfried?"

Then Mime told him the story of his birth, and how Sieglinde had brought Nothung to the cave with her on that night her husband was slain. Mime laid the pieces of the sword before Siegfried.

"It is thy father's," he said, "broken in his death fight. Wotan broke it, and Brunhilde gathered up the pieces and gave them to thy mother, Sieglinde, saying:—

“Save for thy son
The broken sword!
Where his father fell,
On the field I found it.
Who welds it anew,
And waves it again,
His name he gains from me now
Siegfried, the hero be hailed!”

Siegfried took Nothung into his hands and tapped the pieces softly, glad to know that his father was a hero who had died in battle, instead of the cowardly little black dwarf standing there before him. So angry was he at Mime for claiming to be his father, that he flung the sword upon the anvil, crying, “Weld this for me!” and rushed off into the forest.

Mime had already tried many times to weld this sword, but the pieces would never meet. Now, however, heating his fire very hot, he tried once more. As he was clattering and hammering upon his anvil, he looked up and saw Wotan standing in the darkness of the cave. Wotan laughed at the little dwarf. “In vain thou strivest to weld Nothung,” he said; “only he who knows no fear may weld the sword.”

Mime flung down his hammer and gave up the task. Then Wotan disappeared.

When Siegfried returned to the cave he found the fire almost out, the cave in darkness, and Mime sitting idle in a corner, while the sword still lay in pieces upon the anvil.

"What!" cried Siegfried, "weldest thou not my sword?"

"I cannot weld the sword," said Mime; "only a man who knows not fear welds Nothung."

"And what is fear?" asked Siegfried.

The dwarf by many stories tried to make Siegfried understand the meaning of fear. Siegfried laughed at them. At length Mime said, "Alberich, my brother, watches the Neidhole. In it lies Fafnir the dragon, guarding the hoard, the ring, and the tarn helm. To feel his fiery breath is death. His skin cannot be pierced by ten swords. If I led thee to him, Siegfried, what wouldst thou do?"

"Kill him," cried the lad. "Fafnir could not fright me!"

He sprang toward the anvil and blew the fire to a roaring blaze. Swinging the hammer, he cried, "I, Siegfried, will weld Nothung." Singing the song of the sword, he worked rapidly until he had hammered the pieces together.

Mime watched him, trembling. Then he crept

softly, deep into the cave, where he took down a drinking horn and brewed a drink of poison. Covering the top of the horn, he hung it to his belt and came back into the firelight, just in time to see Siegfried wave Nothung about his head, where it flashed like a streak of lightning.

That he might try the sword, as he had tried so many others, Siegfried struck it down upon the anvil, and this time not the sword, but the anvil, broke into pieces. "Now I have Nothung," he cried; "lead me to Fafnir."

Fafnir the dragon lay asleep. At the entrance of the Neidhole sat Alberich, keeping watch. As the morning light crept through the trees, up the forest path he saw Siegfried approaching, followed by Mime.

When Mime pointed out the Neidhole, Siegfried gayly blew his hunting horn to call forth the dragon. Fafnir, roused from his sleep by the horn's note, crawled from the hole and looked scornfully upon the youth with the golden hair who wished to fight him. Siegfried, however, sounded his battle cry and rushed to the fight, while Alberich crept into a corner of the cave, and Mime hid behind a tree.

The dragon, snorting great blasts of fire, and



From the painting by Dieltz.

"SIEGFRIED PLUNGED NOTHING DEEP INTO FAFNIR'S HEART."

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winding his awful coils, sprang at Siegfried. The lad swung his sword before him and jumped aside so swiftly that Fafnir could not touch him. When the dragon's breast was bare before him, he plunged Nothung deep into Fafnir's heart.

Fafnir, dying, called to Siegfried and told him of the ring and the tarn helm. Then, rolling over, he died. Siegfried drew the sword from Fafnir's breast, and a drop of fiery blood fell upon his hand. The painful smart caused him to put his hand to his lips.

No sooner was this done than he found he could understand the speech of all the forest birds. A bird above his head began to sing these words:—

“Hi! Siegfried shall have now
The Nibelung's hoard.
For here in the hole
It awaits his hand!
Let him not turn from the tarn helm,
It leads to tasks of delight;
But finds he a ring for his finger,
The world he will rule with his will.”

Siegfried thanked the bird and ran into the hole.

Neither Alberich nor Mime saw Siegfried enter the cave. Meeting each other at its opening, they fell into a fierce quarrel as to who should go for the

treasure. Before they settled it, Siegfried came out bearing the golden helmet and the ring. Both dwarfs slunk back at the sight of him, and Mime, pretending love for Siegfried, said he must be thirsty after so great a fight. Running to a spring he stooped, as if to fill a horn with water, but really he uncovered the drink of poison hanging at his belt. But as he offered it to Siegfried, a bird sang softly, "Touch not; 'tis death to drink." Siegfried, angered by this last act of wickedness, drew Nothung and killed Mime, whom he flung into the Neidhole, while Alberich rushed away for safety.

•SIEGFRIED AND BRUNHILDE.

Siegfried now stood alone in the forest. Above his head the sun shone and the trees whispered. Presently the bird called again softly:—

"Siegfried ! Siegfried !
Brunhilde sleeps
On loftiest heights !
Her hall is a hall of fire ;
If the hero strides through the blaze,
He finds a wife."

Siegfried, swinging his sword and blowing his merry bugle, sprang up the mountain side. Higher and higher he climbed, until he was stopped by

a great wall of fire. It was Loki's fire. In the fight when Nothung was broken, Brunhilde had disobeyed Wotan, and for punishment she lay asleep, covered with helmet and shield, within this circle of flame, until the hero who knew no fear should waken her.

For an instant Siegfried looked upon the scarlet and gold of the mounting flames. Then recklessly he plunged into them and through them, till he reached the silent mountain summit, with its green grass and great rocks.

There lay Brunhilde upon her bed of moss, covered with shield and helmet, as her father Wotan had left her. Siegfried, springing toward her, lifted them and saw her lying there, robed in white, with her golden hair falling about her. He knew not what to think. Never before in his life had he seen a woman. With a cry of joy he stooped and kissed her.

Brunhilde awakened. The punishment was over. A fearless hero had opened her eyes once more upon the beautiful world. She lifted her face to the warm sunlight, and taking Siegfried's hand, sang a hymn of joy to the sun.

Brunhilde married Siegfried, but their happiness was spoiled by the curse of the ring. The Rhine

still flowed sadly and the Rhine daughters wailed for their gold. Then one day Siegfried was killed upon its banks. They built a great funeral pile for him, and on it laid the ring and the tarn helm.

Slowly, as the flames died down, the waves of the Rhine crept round the pile and washed the magic gold back into the river. The Rhine daughters with a cry carried it to the Rhine hill, and as its light again flashed forth, the curse was lifted, and joyously rang their cry : —

“ Rhinegold, Rhinegold,
Loveliest gold ! glorious gold ! ”



THE PRINCE IVAN AND THE FIRE-BIRD.

RUSSIA.



RUSSIA is the largest country of Europe and has also great possessions in Asia. The ruler of Russia, called the Czar, now reigns in St. Petersburg.

The earliest history of Russia tells of men who lived in what is now the southern part of the land, where it is warmer and greener than in the regions of the frozen north. The northern country was then unknown. The early Russians were called Slavs, and the story of Prince Ivan¹ is a myth which belongs to this southern people.

THE FIRE-BIRD.

In the ancient kingdom of Russia, there once lived the Czar Wislav.² He had a garden that was

¹ Ivan = ē'-văn.

² Wislav = wīs'-lāv.

very beautiful and very wonderful as well, for within it bloomed flowers of every sort, and the trees there bore a great variety of fruit.

Row after row of trees bore peaches of pure silver, and in an apple orchard near the palace the apple trees bore apples all of gold.

These golden apples were favorites of the Czar. Every morning he went to the palace window to see the sunlight twinkling upon his golden apples; and every evening ere he went to bed he peered out at the lovely fruit, shimmering in starshine and moonlight. The Czar had but one sorrow. The Fire-bird came night after night to his garden to pluck and carry away his golden apples.

The Fire-bird came down from the frozen north. She had wings of gold and eyes like the gems of the East. The long feathers of her tail glowed and sparkled like living fire. Night after night she came to the garden and carried away the Czar's apples.

Now the Czar had three sons: Dimitri,¹ tall, lazy, and good-natured; Vasili,² stout, thick-headed, and sleepy; and the young and slender-limbed prince, Ivan.

When the Czar, sorrowfully counting his golden

¹ Dimitri = dī-mī'-tri.

² Vasili = vā-sīl'-i.

apples, found that they were disappearing very fast, he called his three sons to him. "My dear children," said he, "whichever one of you can catch the Fire-bird in my garden and take her alive, to him I will give during my life one half of the kingdom, and at my death he shall have it all."

The sons cried out with one voice, "Gracious Sovereign, our father, with great pleasure we will try to take the Fire-bird alive!"

The first night Dimitri went out to sit by the golden apple trees and watch for the Fire-bird. But the trees rustled their leaves and the fountains dripped soothingly, and Dimitri fell asleep. As soon as his eyes were closed, down swooped the Fire-bird and plucked many apples.

Next morning the Czar sent for Dimitri. "Well, my dear son," he asked, "didst thou see the Fire-bird?"

"No, my dear father," replied Dimitri, "the Fire-bird did not come."

Next night Vasili watched and the same thing happened to him.

The Czar now sent for little Ivan. "My son," he said, "thou art young indeed to be set to watch for the Fire-bird. I put it to thee fairly now. Wilt thou sit to-night among the apples of

gold?" Ivan doffed his plumed hat to the ground and replied, "My father, I will watch for the Fire-bird."

At nightfall Ivan took his seat in the garden,



"DIMITRI FELL ASLEEP."

but in his hand he held two large flat pebbles. An hour went by, and a second and third. He heard the wind rustling the leaves of the trees, and the fountain's murmuring drip. By and by he grew

sleepy, and his eyelids began to droop. Then he put the two large pebbles in his mouth, one in each cheek. These made him so uncomfortable that he was wide awake in a few minutes.

All at once the whole garden was lighted up so that it glowed as with fire. The Fire-bird, alighting upon a tree, began to pluck the golden apples. Ivan stole softly up behind her, and caught her by the tail. But he was not strong enough to hold her. She flew away, leaving one of her golden feathers in his hand.

Next morning, the moment the Czar wakened from his sleep, Ivan ran to him and gave him the feather. The Czar was greatly delighted that his youngest son had been able to get even one feather from the Fire-bird.

This feather was so wonderful and bright that when carried into a dark room it shone as if a great number of waxen tapers had been lighted. The Czar put the feather in a cabinet, to be guarded as a treasure forever, and sent for his sons, Dimitri and Vasili.

THE SEARCH FOR THE FIRE-BIRD.

When the three lads stood before the Czar, he said: "Your brother Ivan has plucked a feather

from the Fire-bird's tail. She will therefore visit the garden to take apples no more, but I wish to possess her alive."

Both Dimitri and Vasili cast looks of hatred upon their brother Ivan.

"Now, do you, my dear sons, Dimitri and Vasili, kneel and receive my blessing." When it had been given them, the Czar continued, "Set out, find the Fire-bird, and bring her to me alive; and he who brings me the bird shall surely receive what I promised at first."

When his brothers had gone, Ivan, too, prayed his father for his blessing. The Czar said to him: "My dear son, my darling child, thou art still too young to travel such a long and difficult journey; why shouldst thou part from me? Thy brothers have gone. Now, if thou goest too, and all three of you fail to return for a long time, who, if the Lord takes my life, will rule in my place? There might be trouble among our people. Who would stop it? If an enemy were to invade the land, who would command our men?"

But Ivan pleaded with his father to let him go, until at last he obtained his consent and blessing. Then he chose a swift horse from the stables, and rode away.

Riding by path and by road, Ivan at last came into lanes that ran between green fields; in the center of a field rose a tall pillar. From the pillar three roads branched away; one ran directly ahead, one ran to the left, the other to the right.

Ivan rode up to the pillar, and upon it found written the following words: "Whoever goes from the pillar straight forward will be hungry and cold; whoever goes to the right hand will be healthy and well, but his horse will be dead; whoever goes to the left hand will be dead himself, but his horse will be living and well."

Ivan read the words, and then chose the right-hand road, thinking that, while his horse might be killed, he himself would escape, and in time he could get another horse. So he rode on for three days.

All at once an enormous gray wolf came out against him and said: "Oh! do I see thee, tender youth, Ivan, the son of the Czar? Thou hast read on the pillar that thy horse will be dead; why, then, hast thou come hither?"

With these words, the gray wolf sprang upon Ivan's horse, tore him to pieces, and left Ivan alone. Ivan, seeing his dear horse lying dead, burst into bitter tears. Then he trudged forward

on foot and walked all day, until at nightfall he was very, very tired.

Just as he was going to sit down and rest, the gray wolf came up to him and said: "I am sorry for thee, Ivan, son of the Czar; thou art tired from walking; I am sorry that I killed thy good steed. Now sit thou upon the back of the old wolf, and tell me where thou art going, that I may carry thee thither."

Ivan thanked the gray wolf and told him where he wished to go, and the gray wolf shot ahead with him swifter than a horse could run. For a whole day he ran forward with Ivan upon his back, and at nightfall they came to a stone wall, which was not very high.

The gray wolf halted and said: "Now, Ivan, son of the Czar, climb over that stone wall; on the other side is a garden, and in the garden the Fire-bird sits in a golden cage. Take the Fire-bird, but do not touch the cage. If thou touchest the cage, thou shalt not escape; they will seize thee straight-way." With these words the gray wolf disappeared.

Ivan climbed over the wall into the garden. There, in the midst of beautiful trees, he saw the Fire-bird hanging in a golden cage. The cage was so dazzling that Ivan desired it even more than he



"TURNING, HE RAN AND SNATCHED THE CAGE."

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did the Fire-bird. He took the bird from the cage without trouble, and was going toward the garden wall, when, looking back, the shining cage tempted him. "Why have I taken the bird without the cage?" he thought. "Where can I put her?" And turning, he ran and snatched the cage.

Immediately a noise like thunder rolled through the garden. The cage was chained to great ropes of gold, attached to enormous gongs. These hammered and thundered, and wakened the watchmen of the garden, who ran forward and seized Ivan as he stood there with the Fire-bird under his arm.

THE STEED WITH THE GOLDEN MANE.

The watchmen led Ivan up to a beautiful palace, and dragged him into the presence of the Czar Dolmat,¹ who shouted at him in loud and angry tones: "Is it not a shame for thee, young man, to steal? But who art thou? Who is thy father?"

Ivan replied: "I am Ivan, son of the Czar Wislav. Thy Fire-bird used to visit my father's garden each night, to pluck golden apples from my father's favorite apple trees. Therefore my father has sent me to find the Fire-bird and bring her to him."

¹ Dolmat = döl'-mät.

“Oh, young man,” cried Dolmat, “and is it fitting to do as thou hast done? Thou shouldst have come to me and I would have given thee the Fire-bird with honor; but now I shall publish it abroad in all lands and kingdoms, how dishonorably thou hast acted in my kingdom.

“Listen, however, Ivan, son of a Czar. If thou wilt do me a service, — if thou wilt go beyond the thrice ninth land to the thirtieth kingdom, and get for me from the Czar Afron¹ the golden-maned steed, I will forgive thee thy offence, and give thee the Fire-bird with great honor. If thou dost not this, I will publish thee in all kingdoms as a dishonorable thief.”

In great grief Ivan left Czar Dolmat, promising faithfully to seek the steed with the golden mane. On the road he met the gray wolf and told him all that Czar Dolmat had said.

The gray wolf shook his head. “Why didst thou disobey me?” he cried. “Why didst thou take the golden cage?”

“I have offended in thy sight,” said Ivan, and hung his head.

“I forgive thee. Climb upon my back,” said the gray wolf, “and I will take thee wherever thou wishest.”

¹ Afron = ā'-frōn.

Ivan sat upon the back of the gray wolf, who carried him quickly to the kingdom of the Czar Afron. There, before the white-walled stables of the steed with the golden mane, the wolf set Ivan down.

“Go in,” said he, and lead forth the horse from the stable, but do not touch the golden bridle, or all that befell thee with the Fire-bird will befall thee here.”

Ivan led forth the steed quietly, but could not withstand the glitter of the golden bridle. He reached up for it. The minute his hands touched it, however, crash went all the gongs of the stables, which were attached to the cords of the bridle, and the grooms, running hastily, dragged Ivan before Czar Afron.

Czar Afron rebuked him in the same way as had Czar Dolmat, and told him that, unless he would ride to a distant kingdom, and bring to him the lovely Princess Yelena,¹ he would publish him as a dishonorable thief.

Ivan, weeping, met the gray wolf upon the road. “See,” said the gray wolf, “what comes of not listening to good advice.”

“The fault was mine,” cried Ivan.

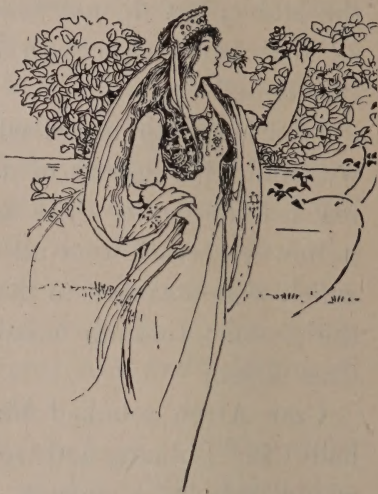
¹ Yelena = yě-lēn'-a.

“Well, I forgive thee,” said the wolf. “Jump upon my back and we will go for the princess.”

THE PRINCESS YELENA.

Swift as an arrow, the gray wolf carried Ivan to a golden fence, surrounding a beautiful garden, within which dwelt the Princess Yelena.

Bidding Ivan wait for him beneath a green oak tree, the wolf sat outside the golden fence till the princess, with her ladies and nurses, came at sunset to walk in the garden. When the princess passed the place where the gray wolf was sitting, he jumped suddenly, caught her in his mouth, and ran with her to Ivan under his oak tree.



Ivan and the princess then sat upon the wolf's back and were taken to the kingdom of Czar Afron. As they rode along, the beautiful princess told Ivan she did not wish to become the wife of the Czar

Afron. "I will see to that," promised the gray wolf.

When they arrived at the palace garden, the wolf suddenly stamped his foot, and at once he became a lovely princess, exactly like the Princess Yelena. Ivan put the real princess, trembling with fear, under a sheltering tree, and led the wolf-princess to the Czar. Filled with joy, Czar Afron gave Ivan the golden-maned steed, and mounting it with the real princess, Ivan rode away to the kingdom of the Czar Dolmat.

On their way they were overtaken by the gray wolf, who had left Czar Afron. The wolf took Ivan upon his back, while the princess rode the golden-maned steed, and the four swiftly reached the kingdom of the Czar.

But at the gate of the garden, the Princess Yelena wept because she must be separated from the steed with the golden mane. "Have no fear," said the gray wolf.

He stamped his foot and immediately became a steed with a golden mane. Ivan led the real steed, with the lovely princess on his back, to a sheltering tree, and took the wolf-steed to Czar Dolmat, who in great joy gave Ivan the Fire-bird in the golden cage. A little later, the gray wolf, having escaped

from Czar Dolmat, came along and took Ivan once again upon his back.

When the gray wolf had carried Ivan, with the princess and the Fire-bird to the spot where he had killed Ivan's horse, he bade them good-by, and they rode happily toward the kingdom of the Czar Wislav. Ivan grieved over the loss of the gray wolf, and the princess, becoming tired, begged to be allowed to rest by the wayside. There she fell asleep, and Ivan also fell asleep, holding the bridle of the steed with the golden mane.

As they slept, along the road came Dimitri and Vasili, who, having searched in vain for the Fire-bird, were returning homeward, downcast and sullen. Seeing Ivan lying asleep, with the Fire-bird, the steed with the golden mane, and the Princess Yelena, in his possession, Dimitri drew sword and slew him.

Then, catching up the princess and the Fire-bird, they led the steed with the golden mane, and entered their father's kingdom in honor and great triumph.

THE GRAY WOLF.

The gray wolf, left alone, missed Ivan. After roaming about for several days, he turned, and

swift as an arrow flies, followed the path which Ivan had taken. When he reached the tree where Ivan lay dead, he saw two ravens hovering over the dead body. They were a mother raven with her young raven.

The wolf snatched at the young raven and tore it in two, while the mother raven uttered wild cries of grief. The gray wolf, seeing Ivan lying there, said to the bird, "Go quickly to the thrice ninth land of the thirtieth kingdom, and bring me hence the water of Life and the water of Death."

The raven, flying willingly, soon returned with two small crystal bottles. The gray wolf poured the water of Death upon the young raven, and its body grew together. Then he poured the water of Life upon it, and it flew alive to its mother.

The gray wolf did likewise to Ivan, and the prince stood up alive. He cried out with joy at seeing the gray wolf, and then looked about for the Fire-bird, the horse, and the princess.

"Jump upon my back," cried the wolf; "your wicked brothers killed you and stole your treasures, but we shall see how long they will enjoy them!"

The gray wolf carried him into his father's kingdom, and set him down at the palace door, through which a wedding procession was marching. The

bride was the Princess Yelena ; and the groom, the wicked Dimitri. When Yelena saw Ivan, she cried out and ran to him, saying, " This is the one to whom my heart belongs ! "

The Czar Wislav was overjoyed to see Ivan once more, and the gray wolf, stepping up, told him the whole truth about Dimitri and Vasili.

" Jump on my back," cried the gray wolf to the two evil brothers. They dared not disobey, and he carried them off, no one knows whither.

As for Ivan, he married the Princess Yelena, and to this day they live happily in their kingdom, while the Fire-bird hangs in the garden among the trees which bear the golden apples.





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